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PHOTO BY JOHN ROBISON IV

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Relaxing in the Pacific Northwest

Photo by Dave Heath





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SAIL

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No Place like Home

New England can be a cruel place to sail. You never can tell just what the months of March and April will bring, so you have no idea when your boat will actually touch the water. Woe betide you if you dare dream of an early launch date; like as not, you'll find your spring commissioning plans thwarted by April snowstorms and lingering sub-Arctic temperatures, and you'll be lucky if you're in by Memorial Day, let alone the Fourth of July. Only twice in the last decade can I recall being fully prepped and launched by mid-May, and both times we were hammered by vicious two-day nor'easters that had me wishing the boat was still on the hard.

And yet...once you've launched, all is forgiven and forgotten. A good sailing summer in New England is worth all the angst that precedes it, to say nothing of the race against the calendar to winterize the boat before the first fall frosts. It's just as well that there is a way to experience that glorious summer sailing without owning a boat, as you'll see in our charter feature, "Home is where the boat is," on page 30.

New England is just one of the great cruising grounds in the U.S. that can be enjoyed by the boatless or those who keep their boats elsewhere. I've been fortunate enough to spend some time sailing in the San Juans and Desolation Sound in the Pacific Northwest. I've also chartered in the Chesapeake, and here and there in the Great Lakes; each of these holidays left me with rich memories and a fund of sailing stories. The words "charter vacation" typically evoke visions of the tropics, but it is possible to have a terrific sailing experience in a beautiful part of the world without getting your passport out—or even getting on a plane.

The buzz on the docks down Florida way is all about Cuba, and when—not if—the lifting of an increasingly pointless embargo will be followed by permission for all Americans to travel freely to this Caribbean island. A new cruising ground on our doorstep? Bring it on, break out the Cohibas, and pass the rum: you can guarantee that Marina Hemingway in Havana will be overflowing with American boats within days, if not hours, of restrictions being relaxed. Of course, more than a few intrepid American cruisers have quietly sailed to Cuba over the years, with more of a wink than a nod to the Department of Commerce regulations. Canadian and other cruising boats are a common sight there, too. Will the reality of cruising around this island live up to the allure of the forbidden fruit? I'm looking forward to finding out. 

Peter Nielsen



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FEEDBACK

From the *SAIL* community

Pets

ON BOARD

This is Cali, our rescued Calico cat from Hurricane Ike in Galveston, Texas. Before Ike, Cali was an island cat and lived on Galveston Island. We adopted Cali as she was abandoned after the hurricane. As sailors, we are slowly introducing Cali to our sailing adventures. We bring her on most of our shorter sailing trips and overnights on the boat. The first few times she got seasick and threw up. On a recent trip down the Houston Ship channel to Galveston Island we must have tired her out. If we could read her mind, we are sure she is saying, “Are we there yet?” and “This is boring,” much the same way as our two-legged children, just a little quieter. Priceless!— Steve Lim, via sailmail@sailmagazine.com



@SAILfeed



In “The Many-Headed Hydra” (posted on *SAILfeed* on December 10), Paul Calder wrote of his trip down the East Coast back to his home port of New Orleans, and the experience of adjusting to life back on land. Here are a few of our readers’ comments:

What a great description of becoming a single unit built out of many people. Must be really nice when it works out like that. On a lighter note ... I’m imagining the potential for funky smells in that saloon you have pictured! In all seriousness, I’m sure it’s an experience that will not soon be forgotten. @MikeMcGuire

We sailed for 10 days on a 30-footer in the Sea of Cortez with our adult daughter and her soon to be husband. We became a single organism after several days and for weeks after thought of each other’s every need and well being moment to moment. When it works it is as good as gold. @BrettLaPointe

Really enjoyed your thoughts and can relate to all of them. Took my kids sailing from the Thousand Islands to Venezuela and back in a Vagabond 42 in the late 1990s over a four year period. We all have a perspective about life from our travels that very few people share. Now I have a Cape Dory Typhoon and am getting into sailing again, lots more to learn! @TimPurcell

SAIL Spotlight

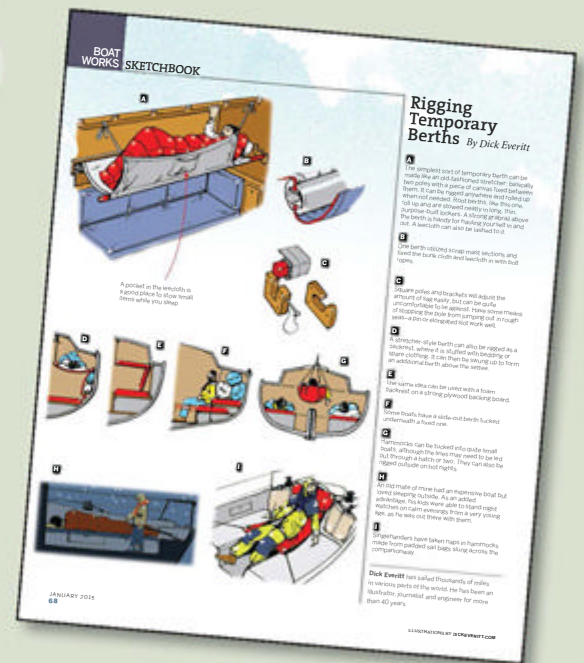
LIVING THE SAIL LIFE

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS

The January *SAIL* Spotlight “Singing Sea Shanties” reminded me of one Sunday morning about three years ago. The whole family was in the car, when suddenly from the backseat our then nine-year-old son surprised us by belting out his rendition of “What Do You Do with a Drunken Sailor.” I was very grateful the laser beams shooting at me from my wife’s eyes weren’t lethal!— David Hutten, Cincinnati, OH, via sailmail@sailmagazine.com



Letters



WHALE OF A TALE

Congrats on the terrific article about whales and collisions (January). The story brings to mind an encounter I had while sailing my diminutive 24ft Alberg, *Minuet In Sea*, down the Haro Strait off eastern Vancouver Island in the 1990s. It was a very quiet morning off of Cordova Bay when a snort caught my attention. Looking to my left, not an arm's length away was the large eye and snout of what I was later to learn was a Minke whale. After a few moments of checking me out, the whale was satisfied, slipped beneath the surface and went on its way, as did I. It was a very special day indeed.

—Jeff Dickey
Vallejo, CA

via sailmail@sailmagazine.com

SPRAY SUGGESTIONS

In regards to the piece "Pepper Protection" in the January issue, filling a fire extinguisher with pepper seems a bit much, and confusing,

especially for guests aboard. (In the event of a fire, things could go bad fast). I suggest using wasp and hornet spray to deter unwanted guests. The cans are innocuous, it is available just about everywhere, you may have them in several handy places, there is no question about what you are holding, the spray/stream will shoot 20 feet or more, and the contents will stop just about anything: no question.

—George Cogswell
Cape Canaveral, FL

via sailmail@sailmagazine.com

SKETCHING IT OUT

I subscribed to *SAIL* in 1980 when I commissioned my new Bayfield 32 in Frenchman's Bay, Ontario. I have sailed *Ailsa* on Lakes Ontario, Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron. Now in our retirement, my wife and I enjoy *Ailsa* more than ever, sailing extended cruises in Georgian Bay and The North Channel. I always take my copy of *SAIL* along and relish anything you write about

sailing, seamanship and the safe operation of small craft in all those beautiful places you cover in your stories. One column I really like is Dick Everitt's Sketchbook. Dick is a talented illustrator whose renderings clearly explain the topic of the month, where photography and words often fail. In this age of computer graphics it is refreshing to browse over Dick's sketches and understand at a glance how to get the job done. Your other illustrators also fire our imaginations.

—Ian More, Keswick, Ontario
via sailmail@sailmagazine.com

AN APPRECIATION

I learned to sail monohulls from my grandfather. Then I became a beach cat guy. Now I am a desperate catamaran "wanna be" owner. My grandfather used to read your magazine religiously. When he passed away a few years ago, I changed the subscription over to myself and actually got the longest running subscription available

just to keep the dream of someday owning my own cat and to honor my grandfather's memory.

I read every issue, and love every story. It takes me far away to see different lands on awesome boats and gives me hope of buying or chartering one in the near future. When your magazine changed to the new, bigger, slicker format, I was stunned and very impressed. I absolutely love it and your tales.

So, on this Christmas, I would just like to say thanks from someone who wishes they had one of your fabulous topics to sail around in. Thanks for keeping a dream alive.

—J.J. Havekotte
Boca Raton, FL

via sailmail@sailmagazine.com

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: In the January issue, we wrote that the Sea Scout Base Galveston operates within the Galveston Community Sailing Center. Turns out, the Galveston Community Sailing Center operates within the Sea Scout Base Galveston.

Give us your Feedback

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UNDER SAIL

12 CRUISING **16** RACING **20** ELECTRONICS **22** EXPERIENCE

An aerial photograph of Sydney Harbor, Australia, during a large-scale sailboat race. In the foreground, three large maxi sailboats with dark sails are racing towards the viewer, leaving white wakes in the blue water. The harbor is filled with numerous other boats, including smaller sailboats and motor yachts. In the background, the Sydney city skyline is visible, featuring the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. A lush green island is situated in the middle ground. The sky is clear and blue.

Clash of the Titans

Photo courtesy of Rolex/Carlo Borlenghi

There was plenty of action all around during December's 70th annual Rolex Sydney to Hobart race. But for super-maxi fans the highlight was the battle of the behemoths, with line-honors record-holder *Wild Oats XI* facing off against the newly launched *Comanche*, both seen here departing Sydney. Though *Comanche* won the start, setting a new record to Sydney Heads at the mouth of the harbor, in the end it was *Wild Oats XI* showing the way at the finish. To read more about the race and these two powerhouses, turn to Racecourse on **page 16**.



In many ways a trip to Cuba is a trip back in time

Memories of Cuba

A cruising ground ripe for exploring

By Nigel Calder

In 1995 my family and I circumnavigated Cuba, collecting data for my book, *Cuba: a Cruising Guide*. I had assumed then that relations between the United States and Cuba would soon be normalized, and that the lifting of the embargo would unleash a flood of American sailors eager to explore Cuban waters. How wrong I was! Twenty years later, if Congress does not block President Obama's move to normalize relations, this mysterious destination on our back doorstep may finally open to American cruisers over the next year or two.

In 1995 we found Cuba frozen in time. There is no reason to think much has changed since then. What do we remember? Courteous officials with reams of paperwork for us to complete at every harbor and anchorage, and an absence of corruption. (I fear this is one aspect that is changing.) The monitoring of phones in tourist hotels by the Cuban police state. The close supervision. Being chased by a small gunboat, getting arrested and being held for nine days while the government determined whether we were spying for the CIA. Our guards, charac-



Even the resorts in Cuba offer miles of almost deserted beach

teristically, put down their rifles and took off their shoes when coming aboard. They also showed the children how to make and fly kites from bits of scrap paper and string.

Then there was the awful food in the government-run restaurants. The illegal private restaurants had great food, however, and kept someone posted to warn if officials were approaching so we could escape out the back door. We remember the lack of food in grocery stores, and the lighthouse keepers who raised *jutias* (a species somewhat like a large rat) in cages for meat to eat, and a fellow with a sackcloth-covered wheelbarrow who had illegally butchered and smoked a pig and was trying to surreptitiously sell it on the streets. (After several months with limited provisions, we happily bought a quarter of that pig.)

When we were in Cuba, a severe lack of fuel for public transport had led to the creation of a state-run hitchhiking system. Once when searching for diesel to fill our jerry cans, we traveled to the local gas station in a magnificent horse-drawn carriage that came straight out of the stables of a 19th-century mansion.

Why would anyone want to sail to a country like this? Because you can visit miles of pristine coast with not another boat in sight and not a footprint on the many sandy beaches littered with lovely sea shells. However, these are not your manicured touristed beaches of the West Indies; these are beaches in a state of nature, with scrubby vegetation ashore and almost no infrastructure. Offshore we found virtually untouched reefs, with lobster wandering around on the bottom in broad daylight. Fishermen happily traded dozens of lobster tails for six-packs of beer.

The coast is liberally sprinkled with superbly protected anchorages,



although many are in mangrove-lined swamps where the mosquitoes come out in force as soon as the breeze and daylight fade. The crumbling colonial architecture in the coastal cities is magnificent, accentuated by 1950s-era American cars with engines held together with baling wire and ingenuity. Then there are the Cuban people, who are the friendliest and most hospitable we have met anywhere in our travels, not to mention generous to a fault. Above all, Cuba is an adventure, a time warp that will inevitably be absorbed into our homogenized Western culture.

Exploring Cuba is far removed from the stereotype of Caribbean cruising. It is for self-sufficient, resourceful sailors who want to blaze a trail and experience nature in a pristine (and often unkempt) state. It is for amateur historians and sociologists who want to see first-hand one of the great social experiments of the past century. And it is for all those who want to immerse themselves in an incredibly friendly and culturally rich Caribbean society. For some it will be frustrating and disappointing, but for many, a cruise to Cuba will be remembered and savored long after the island is left behind. **S**

Contributing editor **Nigel Calder** is a veteran cruiser and author of numerous books, including *Nigel Calder's Cruising Handbook*

Oceangoing Gear

By Peter Nielsen

The 28th ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers) finished up in St. Lucia in mid December, and a stroll around the docks at the IGY Rodney Bay Marina yielded some interesting sights. Not least among them was the number of general-purpose production cruisers that weren't specifically built or mar-

keted as ocean boats, but are obviously well capable of transiting the Atlantic in good time and in good shape. Many—but by no means all—of these boats had been owner-modified in one way or another, and the nature of the mods was interesting. Most of the rigs looked standard, although some owners had added

removable inner forestays for heavy-weather headsails. The most obvious differences showed up in the cockpit area, where extra gear deemed important for extended cruising—davits, solar panels, assorted antennae, safety equipment—ends up. Here's a quick look at some of the add-ons and ancillaries.



1 SUPER SOLAR

Lacking a cockpit arch, the skipper of this older cruiser had no choice but to mount his solar panels in the cockpit area. The lifeline-mounted one folds down under sail, while that one the transom can be rotated and swiveled to catch the sun's rays. Note the homemade liferaft cage.

2 POWER GENERATION

In general, there were fewer wind generators than expected. Most boats relied on solar power, and several carried water generators like this towable unit.

3 UBER ARCH

I saw some inventive ways of carrying antennas, but this custom pole stood out above the rest. It held the sternlight, spotlight, foghorn, outboard motor hoist, radome, and no fewer than five assorted GPS, AIS and satcom antennae.

4 BELT-N-BRACES

Another blend of old and new was seen on this boat, with its inflatable Jonbuoy backed up by a good old-fashioned foam-filled lifering.

5 SPRIT

On long downwind passages ease of sailhandling is paramount. Here's a nice blend of traditional and modern—the sprit on this cruiser provides a perfect mounting point for an extending sprit for an A-sail.

6 PROPANE

Most of the European boats sported composite gas cylinders, and it's easy to see why. You can't hang steel cylinders on your stern rail without having them rust away in no time, and you can see at glance how much propane is left in the tank.

7 DAVITS

It's a rare ocean-crosser that hasn't had a stern arch bolted to it. As well as supporting the usual solar panels and wind generator, this one provides a convenient stowage point for a kayak.

8 STERN RAFT

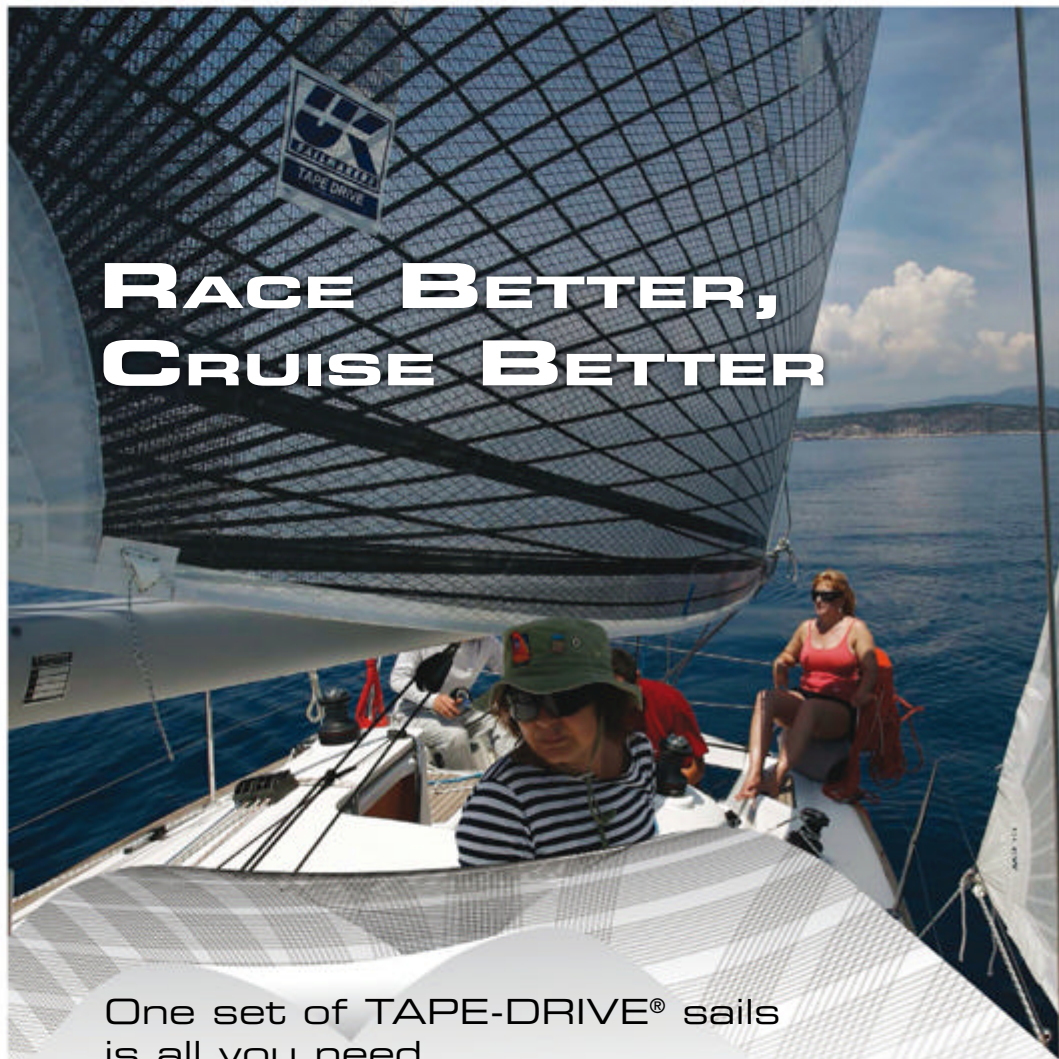
Most boats had liferafts mounted on the pushpit, which is a logical place for them—if a little unsightly. Note the lifebuoy and danbuoy combo—essential safety gear for all but coastal cruising.

9 ANCHOR

Several boats had this good-looking and practical stern-anchor setup. Pull the pin and the anchor deploys. It's ideal for bow-to Med mooring, but also has applications in many other cruising grounds where you can moor with a line to shore.

10 RAFT ARCH

Only recently have builders begun to provide dedicated liferaft stowage, so on most boats more than a few years old it's difficult to find a mounting point that's out of the way. The skipper of this boat has stashed his raft in his cockpit arch. **S**



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Wild Oats XI shortly after the start: note her sculpted bowsprit, the latest in a series of go-fast upgrades

A Maxi Surprise

The older generation wins the line-honors contest in the Sydney to Hobart Race

By
David
Schmidt

December's 70th annual Rolex Sydney to Hobart Race more than lived up to its pre-race hype, especially in the super-maxi class, where five 100-footers tangoed for line honors. Most notable among the super-sleds were the Oatley family's Reichel/Pugh-designed *Wild Oats XI* and Jim and Kristy Clark's brand-new VPLP/Verdier design, *Comanche*, the world's newest and most sophisticated super-maxi. *Comanche* won the start in commanding fashion but *Wild Oats XI* hung close and within a few hours it was clear the tussle for line honors was a private affair, with *Wild Oats XI* clear ahead at the finish in the Derwent River.

While this can hardly be considered a case of David slaying Goliath—both *Wild Oats XI* and *Comanche* are sailed by some of the best ocean sailors alive—the fact remains that a 9-year-old boat beat the world's most technically advanced monohull by 49 minutes in a 628-mile race. Peel away at the onion, however, and some germane facts are revealed.

While *Wild Oats XI* was built in 2005, she has been heavily modified over the years, with lavish attention paid to her rig, sailplan and underwater appendages. Her original "canting ballast twin foil" system has been updated to include a bow centerboard, twin daggerboards, a canting keel and a pair of horizontal foils near the waterline that provide extra lift when running fast in heavy seas. Designer Jim Pugh adds that *Wild*

Oats XI was specifically designed to run the Sydney-Hobart, making her hard to beat—by anybody. "She doesn't have too many weaknesses. She can hang in there until she gets her conditions," Pugh says. "She has also sailed a lot, mostly in the Sydney-Hobart and in preparation, and the crew knows the boat really well."

Conversely, *Comanche* was designed to break major ocean-racing records, including tradewind contests and round-the-world races. Because of this she reportedly carries some 25ft of beam, which provides massive form stability when the true wind swings abaft the beam and blows dogs off their chains, but also results in a very large wetted surface if there isn't enough wind to get her heeling—a situation that was often the case during the recent Sydney Hobart, which was light and mostly upwind.

By comparison, *Wild Oats XI* carries just 17 feet of beam, which makes her especially slippery sailing to weather.

The question becomes, what's next? While the Oatleys have already vowed that *Wild Oats XI* will return to defend her honor in 2015, the Clarks have been quieter about their Rolex Sydney to Hobart plans, as *Comanche* is expected to have a busy globetrotting schedule. Time will tell. **S**

Comanche (top) carries dramatically more beam aft than *Wild Oats XI* (bottom)



The shape of speed? Organizers expect a variety of boat types to take the challenge; the race's executive director, Jake Beattie (bottom)



No-Rules Racing to Alaska

Few races have captured our imagination here at *SAIL* as much as the recently announced Race to Alaska (R2AK), which kicks off on June 4 in Port Townsend, Washington, and takes competitors to Ketchikan, Alaska, a distance of 750 miles, with a one-day pit stop in Victoria, British Columbia. The R2AK is open to any vessel that doesn't carry auxiliary power or rely on a shore-based support team. Otherwise, racers can bring unlimited crew, provided each person completes the entire course. The only other major requirement is that all entrants must finish before the "sweep boat" arrives in Ketchikan. The event is being run—and insured—by the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend and was the brainchild of Jake Beattie, the center's executive director. We recently caught up with Beattie to learn more.

SAIL: What was the inspiration for the R2AK?

Jake Beattie: Like all good ideas, it happened over a beer, at the 2013 Port Townsend Wooden Boat festival. There's a group of "go small, go now and go big" sailors here, and we were talking about how we

could propel the thing we love into the greater conscious. Ideas were pitched, but I walked away thinking that there wasn't enough sizzle. So with Josh Colvin and Collin Angus, we decided to "X-Prize it": Nail \$10,000 to a tree and see who gets it. We want to keep it as simple and wild as possible. We tried to stay true to this principle, and we have a committed board at the Northwest Maritime Center.

SAIL: What do you think are the biggest risks for the racers?

JB: Over-confidence, fatigue and cold water. There's shipping traffic, but it's visible, and you can use VHF. I think that the biggest risk is for someone who's unfamiliar with big tides and cold water. I worry a lot about the amount of driftwood...and there are a lot of bears on the beaches. There's a lot more "damn the torpedoes" in the race than yacht-club energy. There are a lot of unknowns—that's the riddle.

SAIL: What about the biggest challenges?

JB: I think that fatigue will be the biggest factor. It's a long enough race that it's not safe to gut it out. In my small-boat



adventures, I've learned that fate, irony and hubris are what do the most damage.

SAIL: What percentage of the starters do you expect to see finish?

JB: I'm excited to monitor the people who opt-out after Victoria, and to also see who opts in for the second leg after completing Leg 1. One of the beautiful things about the course is that there are a lot of chances to opt out in the first 300 miles, from Port Townsend to Port Hardy. That helps me to not freak out so much!—DS

Q&A

Lightning Strikes Twice

David Schmidt talks with Jason Carroll, the first two-time Melges 32 World Champion

Many of sailing's great names have won the Melges 32 World Championship, but until now these wins were always one-offs. Jason Carroll, 37, of New York City, grew up sailing on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake before matriculating at Harvard, where he sailed Larks and Interclubs. Next came Vanguard 15s, which he raced while he built Hudson River Trading, a quantitative trading firm he co-founded. Carroll entered the Melges 32 class in 2007 with some college sailing friends and slowly improved the team's performance. Come 2011, Carroll's *Argo* program was a serious blend of Corinthian and professional talent, including tactician Cameron Appleton. The team won the Melges 32 Worlds in 2013, and then, in December 2014, *Argo* stunned the racing community by repeating. We caught up with Carroll to learn more.

SAIL: What drew you to the Melges 32 class?

Jason Carroll: I wanted something more challenging than the Vanguard 15, and the Melges 32 was the new exciting thing. My college sailing friends and I thought that we'd be less disadvantaged if we joined a new fleet, so we chartered a boat for the 2007 Melges 32 National Championship in Newport, Rhode Island. We were all dinghy skippers trying to race a team boat. We learned a lot of stuff the hard way, and finished 12th out of 16 boats.

Still, I had a great time. The boat is technical, and the fleet is really competitive—you've got

to be good all-around, and you've got to manage the race technically. It was super fun, and I wanted to get better, but this required devoting more time. We were an all-Corinthian team for the first few years. Our first Worlds was in 2009, and we brought in some pros. It's been a slow evolution, adding people and slowly building a cohesive team.

SAIL: What can you tell me about *Argo's* crew chemistry?

JC: It's a collaborative environment. We all work together to constructively help each team member to do his job as well as possible...and we all individually want to win. This manifests itself when the chips are down—that's when we fight harder than ever. Also, we're all friends off the boat.

SAIL: What was your secret to success in 2013, and did you repeat this same strategy in 2014?

JC: I can't say that anything is a guaranteed recipe for success in this class! By 2013, our crew chemistry was positive and marked by deep respect for each other. We're critical when we make mistakes, but we all know that mistakes happen, so we address this and we move on—there's no lingering resentment.

There's also a great respect between the sailors and the off-the-boat staff.

We built on 2013 for our 2014 season. We used to go out and mingle, but by 2013 we were "in the bubble," playing cards together at night at the team house and spending time together. Our debriefs were less technical—less talk of sail choices or rig tune—and we talked about softer things, like sports psychology.

SAIL: How many years have you been realistically chasing the World title?

JC: 2011 was the first year that we trained in a disciplined way with a coach and a regular team. We had a few wins going into the Worlds, for example the Copa del Ray Regatta, and we finished eighth at the Worlds.

SAIL: Which World Championship win did you have to work harder for and why?

JC: There was a little extra pressure in 2014, but it was a really cool opportunity. After the 2013 Worlds, I thought, OK, we've won the Worlds, but other teams have also done this. Winning consecutive titles added an extra challenge. The guys loved it!

2014 was more physically challenging—there was a lot of wind—and the team really worked hard.



The *Argo* crew dialed in for speed; skipper Jason Carroll (inset)

The go-fast nature of the C&C 30 is not just skin deep; the location of the main constrictor in the mast (right)



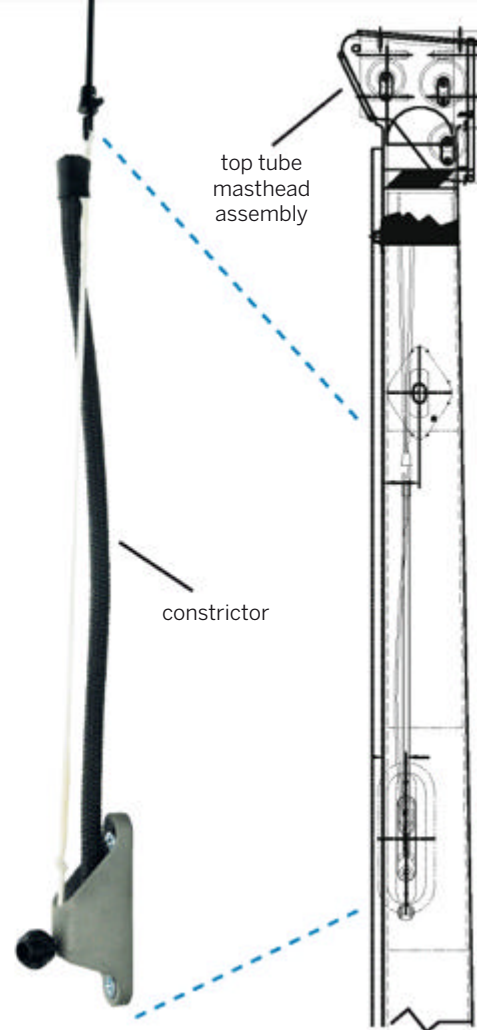
Trick Tech

Modern sailplans, with their high halyard loads, impose unwanted compression on masts. To counter this, many grand prix boats use mechanical halyard locks to confine the load to the top of the spar, rather than carrying it length of the halyard. However, these systems are typically too bulky and complicated to fit in a sport-boat's spindly mast.

To solve this problem the C&C 30 design team decided to employ a pair of narrow,

Ronstan Constrictor rope clutches, which use a tubular fabric "sock" (think Chinese finger cuffs), as opposed metal teeth to secure the line.

Fitted inside the mast section just below the main and jib halyard sheaves, the constrictors are released with a pair of thin Dyneema lines that exit the mast around deck level. A pair of shock cords keeps the socks stretched out when the release lines are eased, so that the constrictors will grip hard and fast, ensuring the sails sit squarely on their datum lines after being raised. **S**



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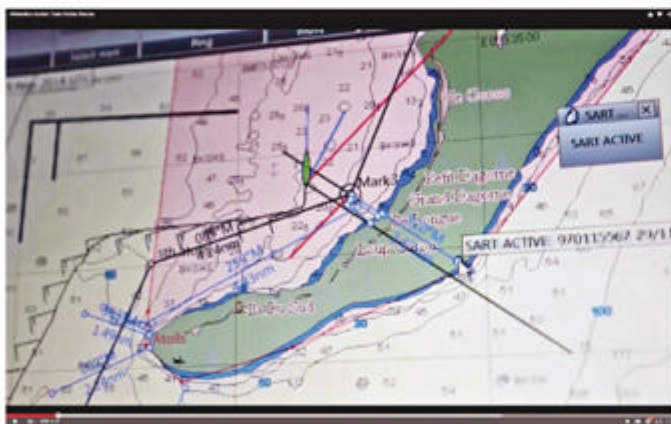


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Lessons from the *Vestas Volvo Wreck*

And what about the C-Map grounding alarm and similar products? **By Ben Ellison**



In a screen grab from onboard *Alvimedica*, the location of *Vestas Wind* is shown by a crewman's PLB, designated as "SART ACTIVE" (far left); an example of a Jeppesen Guardian Alarm (left)

The fixed camera on the stern of *Vestas Wind* captured the worst possible unintended gybe. That's when you're blasting along at 19 knots through a tropical night offshore, and your Volvo Ocean 65 suddenly smashes its way up onto a reef, shearing off the rudders and spinning 180 degrees as the waves and wind take total control.

Of course, the obvious question is: how the heck did professional sailors make this mistake? The fairly large area of reefs and islets is well charted, and is certainly obvious from space. In the screen grab shown above left, taken from a video shot aboard *Alvimedica*, *Vestas Wind* (designated as "SART ACTIVE," actually one of the crew's PLBs) is on the very steep-to, western side of the reef while *Alvimedica* (the green boat icon) is on the safer side ready to assist. While I'm not sure exactly what the Volvo navigators saw on their AdrenaPro Offshore and Expedition 9 charting and routing screens, several reported that they had to zoom way in to see the real danger, and *Vestas Wind* thought the shoal was at least 40 meters deep.

At any rate, *Vestas Wind* navigator Wouter Verbraak and skipper Chris Nicholson have admitted to a grievous navigation error, and hopefully a lot of sailors will now be extra careful with their electronic chart work. But here's the thing: I believe that most every charting program, app and MFD "knows" when we're about to make such a mistake and could warn us! Vector charts are databases of objects and related information, and the algorithms that de-

cide what gets drawn on a screen at any particular location and zoom level are what we need to be careful with, since they can sometimes omit crucial info. However, no matter what a user may see on screen, the software always knows precisely where you're headed relative to the data—whether or not its being displayed. A constantly running search algorithm that can tell us, "Hey, shoal water and then land one mile dead ahead!" doesn't seem hard.

In fact, data-based grounding alarms have existed for quite a while. Jeppesen C-Map calls their version Guardian Alarm and any developer who wants their charting software to use C-Map Max or 4D cartography receives an SDK containing the search algorithms. When available—and apparently that includes a lot of current chartplotters produced by the likes of Furuno, Standard Horizon and Humminbird—the MFD user gets to set a minimum draft and the distance to look ahead. They also get to choose what chart objects will be "interrogated," and the search area is shown on the chart by a red triangle. If a danger is seen, an alarm pops up, and you can also get a report showing what object type triggered the alarm. The Guardian Alarm can only be set to search one mile ahead at max, which is not ideal for a boat doing 19 knots offshore, but it still might have helped (especially if they'd set their draft to 99 feet or whatever that max is). And couldn't ever-improving processors handle longer ranges?

C-Map's grounding alarm doesn't only run

right now to make C-Map 4D cards compatible with all its current displays. I don't know for sure that Guardian Alarm will be part of Lighthouse II v13, but let's hope so.

Let's also note the similar "Look Ahead" function that was prominent on the Maptech i3 over a decade ago, and was also on the sister Sea Ray Navigator, now long gone. The graphic looked something like the Simrad and Echo-pilot forward-scanning sonar that is gaining a new lease on life, but of course, is quite different in potential range and use. I want both!

Finally, Coastal Explorer can also identify obstacles along a planned route and even guesstimate their names by using the data from vector charts. If it had an underway-grounding alarm it could maybe say, "Hey! Cargados Carajos Shoal five miles or 15 minutes dead ahead!"

So what am I missing here? We all make mistakes. Why aren't vector-data-based grounding alarms more readily available, and why aren't they used more when they are available?

As a side note, at press time veteran Volvo Ocean Race navigator and Expedition Developer Nick White e-mailed me to say he has decided to enable C-Map Guardian in his racing software, but he's hoping that no one will use this chart-based grounding alarm as substitute for the proper practice of identifying all dangers ahead. **S**

Editor's Note: For more of Ben Ellison's insights into marine electronics, go to panbo.com



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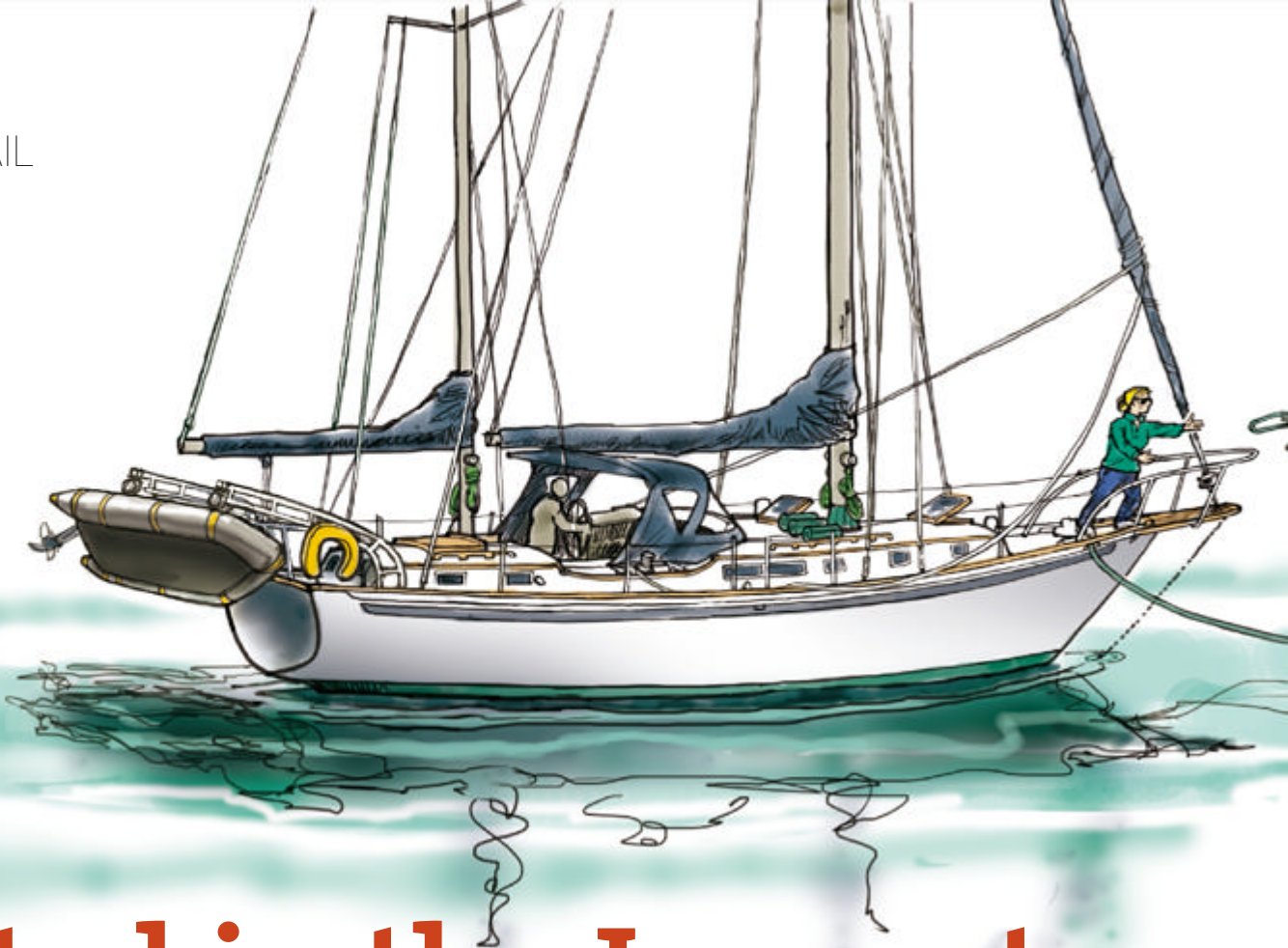
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Volvo Team Alvmedica photo.

The prop shaft is broken, and bad weather is coming. Now what?



Shafted in the Jumentos

My wife, Molly, and I were well into a winter in the Bahamas after a summer spent in the Canadian Maritimes and New England. We had traded the cold water and grandeur of the fiords on the south coast of Newfoundland for the crystal-clear, many-hued water of the Bahamas.

We've owned *Allegria*, a Whitby 42, since 1994 and spent three years cruising the Caribbean and U.S. East Coast back in the '90s. We'd both recently retired, and following a refit that included replacing the engine's drive train, we were ready for another more open-ended cruise. The trip up the East Coast had gone well, without any major problems, and after spending the holidays at our old stomping grounds at St. Petersburg, we were excited to revisit the Bahamas.

We crossed to Bimini, checked in, and then sailed past New Providence to the Exumas. After that we bounced down the chain, revisiting old haunts and were continually amazed at the growth in the local communities and the number of cruisers. Eventually, we made it down to Georgetown and, following a visit from our daughter, set out to explore the Jumentos and Ragged Islands.

We left Georgetown, steering southeast to Thompson Bay, Long Island, and spent a restful night there before heading down Comer Channel underneath Hog Cay toward the northern Jumentos. We were motorsailing in light air, taking it very easy, when suddenly the motor revved up. I quickly threw it into neutral and went belowdecks to investigate. The stuffing box looked normal, but when I checked the transmission coupling, I couldn't believe my eyes—the prop shaft had snapped in two, clean as a whistle,

By
Robert Strickland

Illustration by
Jan Adkins

about about eight inches aft of the coupling.

We were not going anywhere under power now for sure, and in the light air the tide was taking us down onto the rocks of the northern Jumentos Cay at a rapid rate.

We quickly launched the dinghy off the davits, mounted the outboard motor and strapped it to the side of the boat.

After firing up the outboard, we were able to generate enough forward motion to keep off the rocks and head toward Water Cay, our anchorage for the night. We covered the four miles to Water Cay in a couple of hours and found several boats there already at anchor. We picked a spot, got our anchor down and set, and began to assess our options.

The forecast was for another day of no wind, followed by building southeasterlies for about a day and then a cold front with the wind shifting to the south, west and northwest. To effect any kind of repair we felt it necessary to get back to Long Island or Georgetown. But we knew it would be a difficult sail, beating into the southeasterlies up Comer Channel with all the shallow water about. We also knew we did not want to stay where we were as the front passed. Calling out on the radio for any vessel headed back to Georgetown, I got a response from *Paydirt*, a Defever trawler anchored nearby. Onboard we met Mark and Karen, who generously offered to give us a tow to Georgetown.

We made our plans, and I set up a 250-foot towline on our bow and rigged a bridle to both bow cleats and around the windlass. At the same time, Mark set up a bridle on the stern of *Paydirt*. At dawn the following day we passed *Paydirt* our towline and hauled up our anchor. After we'd paid out about 100 feet of our towline, *Paydirt* throttled up her big



WHAT I DID RIGHT:

We kept our heads and assessed all our options at each crisis.

We had the tools and equipment needed to do repairs in the field.

We made sure our repairs were adequate by conducting sea trials before leaving our safe harbor.

WHAT I DID WRONG:

We should have checked the engine alignment prior to leaving.

We knew the engine mounts were old and marginal. We should have replaced them.

The bolts on the aft engine mount brackets had fractured previously. We should have replaced them with stronger Grade 8 bolts at that time.

Lehman engines and slowly picked up speed. Before we knew it we were heading to Georgetown at 6.5 knots. We covered the 65 miles easily and were in the anchorage at Sand Dollar Beach by 1430.

Checking our options, we found the most expeditious way to get a new shaft was to have it shipped from Florida. There are limited facilities and no machine shops on Great Exuma, but my brother Denny lives in Jupiter, Florida, which meant he could provide us with some logistical support. We needed exact measurements for the shaft and that meant pulling out the old one. We started by removing the old coupling from the tranny and pulling the prop off. I had a puller for the prop and a Hookah breathing device to facilitate the underwater work. It took a day of heating and spraying penetrating oil to separate the coupling from the fractured piece of shaft.

The next step was to get the remaining shaft out of the boat, and with it came a moment of truth. As I pulled the shaft out from underwater, Molly pushed a bung into the shaft log from inside, after which I pushed another bung in from outside. Everything

worked as planned, and we laid out the shaft on deck and took our measurements and photos, then replaced the shaft in the log for peace of mind. We emailed the info to my brother and had a new shaft and coupling fabricated and shipped to us within a week.

The new shaft went in as before, and the coupling went together without problems. We replaced the packing in the stuffing box and had a dry boat. After that we began the process of aligning the engine and shaft. As we did so I

found things didn't jive as we made our adjustments. Further inspection revealed the port aft motor-mount bracket bolts had sheared off, so that part of the engine was now unsupported. This was undoubtedly why the shaft had broken.

Accessing that part of the engine was difficult and required some disassembly. I began by removing the exhaust riser from the back of the engine, which allowed me to get down to the engine mount. The adjusting nut was frozen and required some work to free up, but I was finally able to get it moving, only to find the entire shaft was spinning. I elected to pull out the entire mount and bracket, which allowed me to retrieve the fractured pieces of bolt. I did not have a replacement 7/16 bolt in my stash, but Mark on *Paydirt* came through again and produced not one, but two.

With some difficulty, I was able to replace everything and get it tight. After that the alignment process went much more smoothly, and a trial motor across the bay confirmed everything was in working order. We did further sea trials with an excursion to Long, Conception and Rum Cays. Everything went fine then as well.

All in all, our little misfortune gave further credence to the old saw that cruising means working on your boat in exotic places. It also reaffirmed our belief that the cruising community is full of the most wonderful people, with Mark and Karen on *Paydirt* now at the top of that list. **S**

Robert and Molly Strickland have been sailing together some 30 years



Allegria at anchor in Nova Scotia

The author and his wife, Molly



NEW BOATS



VAR 37

A no-frills boat that offers plenty of thrills *By Peter Nielsen*

Germany's Hanse Group may be a boat-building powerhouse, but it began in the humblest of fashions, by repurposing other builders' discarded molds. I well recall seeing Hanse's first boat, the Hanse 291, at a boat show in 1993. In its previous life it had been the Aphrodite 291, a fast and well-mannered 1980s Swedish cruiser-racer. Hanse founder Michael Schmidt built the boats by the score in a derelict furniture factory in the former East Germany, where cheap labor and a bare-bones inventory allowed him to undercut every other production builder by a hefty margin.

So successful was the 291 that Schmidt was able to commission Judel & Vrolijk to draw the sporty Hanse 311, which set the tone for all the Hanses that followed with its bold styling, powerful fractional rig and self-tacking jib.

One of Schmidt's last acts before selling the company a couple years back was to introduce the Varianta 44, which has now been followed by the 37—a pair of no-frills cruisers based on a couple of older Hanse hulls and priced to attract buyers who would otherwise be looking at smaller—or secondhand—boats. In other words: it was back to Hanse's roots. Varianta has been a hit in recession-struck Europe, but how will it fare here? I sailed the first Varianta

37, renamed the VAR 37 by its importer, Martin van Breems, in an effort to find out.

CONSTRUCTION

The VAR 37 employs the hull and (modified) deck molds from the long-running Hanse 370/375, a 2005 Judel & Vrolijk design. However, where Hanse's hulls are sandwich construction, the VAR's is a simple but robust solid laminate, with a vinylester skin coat to ward off blistering. Bulkheads are tabbed to the hull and deck, and a stiffening grid pan is bonded to the hull. The deck molding is foam-cored. The rig is similar to the 375's, but with a slightly overlapping jib as opposed to a trademark Hanse self-tacker.

Despite the heavier hull construction the VAR 37 ends up considerably lighter than the 375, thanks to its stripped-out interior. Combined with the deep cast-iron T-keel and spade rudder of the 375, this translates to an excellent turn of speed.

The VAR looks very stark and white, lacking even a cove stripe to soften those high topsides. Aside from the (optional) teak on the cockpit seats, there's not a splash of color. There's also little in the way of deck gear—only four mooring cleats, for instance—although that's all you really need to sail the boat. It also makes the

37 an easy boat to move around. Side decks are wide and clean, with the jib sheet tracks mounted on the cabintop. As standard, halyards and the sheets for the 109 percent jib come back to clutches and a pair of Lewmar 40s on the cabintop, but the sheets on the test boat were led aft to a pair of Lewmar 45s right by a big wheel. The mainsheet tackle is clipped to a padeye on the cockpit sole in front of the helm. Van Breems is planning to offer a self-tacking jib as an option, which will make this boat super-easy to handle. Meanwhile, the small jib is hardly burdensome.

The VAR 37 may be minimalist in its approach, but everything you need to go sailing is there



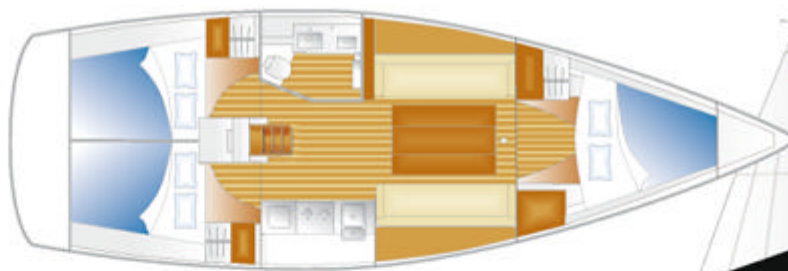
ACCOMMODATIONS

The VAR 37 is an odd mixture of high-quality and just-good-enough. No shortcuts have been taken with basic construction, which is to a good standard. Nor with the rig—tapered Seldén spars are installed on the boats bound for the United States, with single-line reefing and a solid vang. Belowdecks, however, it doesn't take long to realize where the real cost-cutting has taken place. This is a bare-minimum boat. There are no reading lamps, precious few overhead lamps, and the electrical installations are minimalist. Everything meets Germanischer Lloyd standards. It's just that there's not a lot of it.

Interior joinery is about as simple as it comes, angular fabrications of formica-faced marine ply that reminded me of the early efforts of the East German Hanse furniture makers-turned-boatbuilders. It all looks sturdy enough; it's just not what you are used to seeing. And it's practical too. I'd rather see large bins outboard of the settees where I could stuff a seabag or a bagged sail than a row of lockers too small to take anything larger than a loaf of bread.

A two-cabin layout is standard, though the boat I sailed had the optional three-cabin configuration. Berths are all sensibly sized and well upholstered. The linear galley has plenty of stowage, though it's unorganized, and is equipped with only a two-burner stove and a small fridge (which will be increased in size for U.S. buyers).

Savvy Euro-sailors have been buying these boats, gutting them and having custom interiors installed, in the process saving thousands over of the cost of a competing production



VAR 37

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 37ft 6in LWL 37ft 2in BEAM 12ft 3in
DRAFT 6ft 4in (std); 5ft 2in (shoal) DISPLACEMENT 15,700lb
BALLAST 5,700lb SAIL AREA 716ft²
FUEL/WATER/WASTE (GAL) 40/77/15
ENGINE 20hp Volvo with saildrive (std), 30 hp (opt)
BALLAST RATIO 37% SA/D RATIO 19 D/L RATIO 134

What do these ratios mean? Visit sailmagazine.com/ratios

DESIGNER Judel/Vrolijk
BUILDER Hanse Group, Greifswald, Germany
U.S. DISTRIBUTOR Sound Sailing Center,
Norwalk, CT, 203-838-1110, varyachts.com
PRICE \$153,400 (base)

boat. The U.S. importer is similarly offering a number of upgraded joinery packages to be installed by local boatyards. It's a novel concept that just might work.

UNDER SAIL

If simplicity is a virtue, then the VAR 37 is unimpeachable. There's no looking for the correct line to tweak on this boat, because there are so few to choose from. Belowdecks and above, this is a blank sheet upon which an owner can sketch out a boat the way he or she really wants to—or it can be left as-is, thereby providing an uncomplicated, perfectly satisfactory sailing experience.

I sailed a boat equipped with the standard deep keel on a quiet day on Long Island sound. Its sporty nature was evident as soon we set the sails. It was not a day for high top speeds, but we had enough to hint at the



The look in the saloon is basic, but very functional



boat's potential, with the GPS indicating over 6.5 knots hard on the breeze (12.5 knots apparent), on both tacks.

The Jefa steering, with its roller rudder bearings, was feather-light, and the boat was a delight to steer. We tacked through less than 90 degrees and could have done better with practice. The Hanse 375 was no slouch, and this boat is some 600lb lighter. I have little doubt she'll gobble up more than a few 40 footers, if you're into that kind of thing.

UNDER POWER

The test boat was equipped with the optional 30hp Volvo diesel swinging an optional Flexo-fold folding prop—a 20hp engine is standard. The Volvo made its presence felt without being unduly noisy, though better sound insulation would not hurt. The easily driven hull cruised at over 6 knots in flat water. The standard diesel would suit most buyers.

CONCLUSION

If you're the kind of sailor who values simplicity and efficiency and enjoys fitting out a boat, the VAR 37 offers excellent performance at a bargain basement price point. The rest is up to you. **S**

NEW BOATS



Xc 35

A purpose-built cruiser with a fine performance pedigree *By Charles J. Doane*

Since the company's founding in 1979 the Danish builder X-Yachts has established a strong reputation for creating exciting, well-conceived racer-cruisers. In 2008 it expanded its palette and introduced its Xc line of dedicated cruising boats, which have been equally successful. These are not just repurposed race boats, but are designed as cruisers from the keel up, with simpler, less demanding rigs and fuller, deeper hull forms to increase comfort and carrying capacity. Still, they are X-Yachts through and through, which means sailing performance remains a top priority.

The latest Xc ride, a 34-footer, comes in as the smallest member of the family (its four siblings range from 38 to 50ft), but is true to its origins. Picked as the best 31-40ft Monohull in SAIL's 2015 Best Boats competition, the Xc 35 combines superior performance, solid construction quality, excellent modern aesthetics and a good dose of traditional common sense.

CONSTRUCTION

Those who are worried about the integrity of modern sailboat keels will be reassured to know that the structural core of the Xc 35, as on all X-Yachts, is a massive load-bearing hull grid that

supports both the L-shaped ballast keel beneath it and the keel-stepped mast above. (On Xc boats this structural grid is galvanized steel; on the racier Xp boats it is carbon fiber.) Surrounding the grid is a vacuum-infused Diviniceil foam-cored hull laminate, made up of biaxial E-glass set in vinylester resin. Solid laminate is interposed around all through-hull fittings and in the high-load area around the root of the keel.

The deck, likewise, is a foam-cored biaxial laminate set in vinylester, with solid aluminum or marine plywood inserts under all deck fittings. The interior structural bulkheads, in thicknesses ranging from 16-20mm, are also marine plywood and are securely bonded to the hull.

As is typical these days, the Xc 35 carries much of its beam aft, but overall it is not nearly as beamy as most modern cruising boats, so a single rudder is sufficient. The boat, with an attractive subtly sprung sheer line, has a plumb bow and a nearly plumb stern to maximize waterline length. The spars, by John Mast, are all aluminum with discontinuous stainless steel rod rigging.

ON DECK

The most immediately noticeable feature above deck on our test boat was the fixed aluminum-framed cockpit windshield, an optional item I personally would recommend ordering. It gives the boat a distinctive look and is quite functional. Equally noticeable was the lack of a cockpit table, another option I urge you to pony up for. The cockpit is wide enough that you really do need something to brace against when sailing. And, of course, having a table at which to dine al fresco will inevitably enhance your cruising experience.

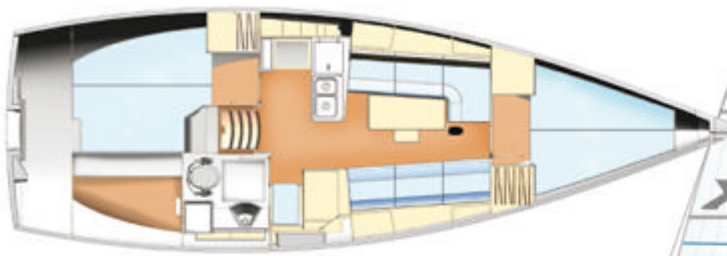
As on so many modern cruisers, the cockpit



The saloon is conventional but very well-executed



For video of the Xc 35, visit sailmagazine.com/video



has twin wheels placed far aft, with a nice open runway between them leading to a fold-down transom. Unlike many production boats, this one has a healthy supply of properly sized winches. Our test boat carried the standard self-tailing Harken Performa winches: two on each side of the cockpit, plus two more on the coachroof. (Stainless steel Andersen winches are also available.) The forward coaming winches are for headsails, while the aft winches, situated right by the helm stations, are exclusively for handling the double-ended German mainsheet, the tails of which run aft below the sidedecks; this allows you to trim both the main and headsail instantly, without having to clutch off first one and then the other as you unload and reload a single winch.

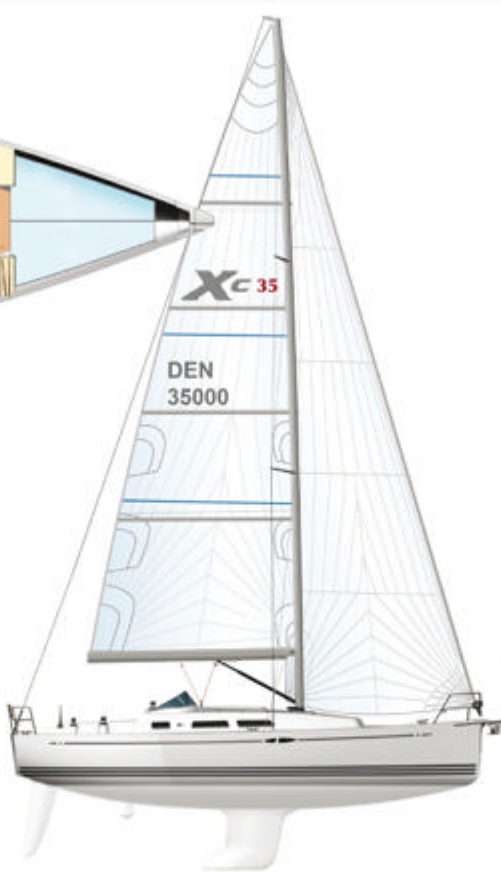
The boat has long genoa tracks, another nice common-sense touch. Chainplates for the shrouds are well inboard, so you can fly a 106-percent blade jib that sheets inside the shrouds or a big 135-percent genoa that sheets outside farther aft. Couple these two basic headsail options with an asymmetric spinnaker to be flown off the optional A-frame anchor-roller/bowsprit, and you can keep the boat sailing well in a wide range of conditions.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The interior layout is traditional and straightforward. The saloon features two long straight settees (that will make great sea-berths) positioned on either side of a fixed table on centerline that has a clever fold-over top. The galley is aft to port, with a two-burner Eno range and oven, and a top-loading Isotherm fridge. Storage space here is adequate, but not great, and there is a lack of dedicated counter space. To make up for this, the twin sinks are refreshingly large and located on centerline, right where they belong.

The double V-berth in the forward stateroom includes adequate space at the foot of the berth. The aft stateroom has standing headroom by the door, good vertical clearance over the berth and decent ventilation, thanks to the opening side ports and an overhead deck hatch.

The single head is aft to starboard, right behind the full-size nav station. The space is a bit



cramped, but perfectly serviceable, with the Jabco toilet oriented just the way I like, fore and aft, with a nice bulkhead to lean into on either side. There's also a useful hanging wet locker. Aft the toilet is a vast storage space that can also be accessed from the cockpit. The engine space is a bit tight, but there is good access on three sides, and the sound insulation is very good.

UNDER SAIL

Our test sail was on Chesapeake Bay in true winds ranging from 15 to 22 knots. We sailed the Xc 35 first with the full main and 106-percent headsail up, then with a reef in the main and also under just the full main alone. Comparing relative speeds at the boat's hottest apparent wind angle—60 degrees—will give you a good idea of its ability. Under mainsail alone we made 6.6 knots. With the 106-percent battened headsail out and a reef in the main, we made 7.8 knots. Under full sail we made 8.2 knots. For a 34-foot monohull that is not at all shabby.

The boat is also closewinded. Under full sail in 2ft to 3ft seas, she was fully powered up and sailing better than 7 knots at a 35-degree apparent wind angle. Pinching to 30 degrees, she lost little speed, making just under 7 knots. My guess is that in flatter conditions she will sail efficiently at an angle of as little as 25 degrees.

Bearing away, though we had no downwind sails onboard, our pace was not much diminished. On a flat reach under full sail we made

Xc 35

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 34ft LWL 31ft 6in BEAM 11ft 5in
DRAFT 6ft 2in (std); 5ft 3in (shoal) DISPLACEMENT 14,220lb
BALLAST 4,740lb SAIL AREA 705ft² (with 106% jib)
FUEL/WATER/WASTE (GAL) 43/64/14
ENGINE 30hp Yanmar diesel (saildrive)
BALLAST RATIO 33% SA/D RATIO 19 D/L RATIO 203

What do these ratios mean? Visit sailmagazine.com/ratios

DESIGNER Niels Jeppesen
BUILDER X-Yachts, Haderslev, Denmark
U.S. DISTRIBUTOR X-Yachts USA, Noank, CT,
860-536-7776, x-yachts.com
PRICE \$290,000 (sailaway)

7.8 knots. This decreased to only 7.3 knots when we dove down onto a broad reach.

Better still, the boat has an absolutely delicious helm. The Jefa steering system provides excellent feedback, and steering is precise and accurate. You do need to pay attention, as the boat is responsive enough that mistakes will be punished. But these are relatively hard to make, as the boat is easily controlled in gusts, with no tendency to gripe. Try as I might, I just could not get that deep rudder to let go of the water.

UNDER POWER

Glancing at the Xc 35's spec sheet, I thought her 30hp Yanmar auxiliary might leave her underpowered. In the event it seemed her hull is slippery enough to move well regardless. Running downwind with the throttle pegged out at 3,000 rpm, we made 7.3 knots. At a more normal cruising setting of 2,400 rpm, we still ran at 6.7 knots. Turning upwind into the gusty breeze and significant seas, we managed 5.4 knots at the same setting. The boat turns a two-blade Flexofold folding prop on a saildrive and is not too quick to respond when thrown into reverse. Once it's moving, however, the boat is easy to control.

CONCLUSION

This is not a boat for those who like maximum onboard living space; it is for serious sailors who want to cruise comfortably in a vessel that is fast and responsive. If you are addicted to bloated interiors, you will think the accommodation space on the Xc 35 is too small. But if you are addicted to performance for its own sake and are thinking you'd like to cruise in something that is not too large and unwieldy, this is the boat for you. **S**

NEW GEAR

By Christopher White



LISTEN UP

The NYNE Aqua portable waterproof Bluetooth speaker is a great addition to your boat's musical arsenal. The speaker has a 33ft Bluetooth connectivity range, so you can stream music from your smartphone (or any other Bluetooth enabled device) from pretty much anywhere onboard, and it includes a built-in microphone, so if you're listening to music through your smartphone you can send and receive calls. Designed to work just as well resting on your cockpit table or floating in water, the device has a waterproof rating of IPX-7, meaning that it can be submerged to depths of 3ft and still function (though obviously sound quality will be better above the surface). The Aqua will get 10 hours of playtime off a single charge, and comes with a USB charging chord, an audio cable (for listening off a device without using Bluetooth) and a hanging strap. Want to go for a paddle in the kayak with a little background music or cruise in the dinghy to your own soundtrack? With the NYNE Aqua, it's not a problem. **\$129.95. Nyne Multimedia, nyne.com**



SHINE A LIGHT

A high performance waterproof flashlight is an essential onboard accessory. The Olympia RG850 has all the staples of a rugged fixture on your boat—waterproof and impact resistant, with a molded grip that makes it easy to handle in wet weather and with gloves on. It has five settings, ranging from different levels of brightness to a strobe light and SOS setting. But what really made this flashlight stand out for us was its micro-USD charging port. Hate replacing batteries? Good, you're normal. With this flashlight, plug it in after you're done spying for that stray screw in the engine room and it'll be good to go the next time you need it. All flashlights have a two-year warranty. **\$89.99. Giant International, olympiaproducts.com**



DRINK UP

With the spike in the popularity of bourbon we've seen in the last few years, there seem to be different boutique versions of the stuff popping up everywhere, from Brooklyn to Berkeley. However, if you want a unique bottle for your galley that will taste as good as the story you tell about it, pick up a bottle of Jefferson's Ocean. Trey Zoeller, the master blender at Jefferson's, picked up 62 barrels of whiskey aged 6 to 8 years and then put them on a container ship for six months, during which time they went around the world, stopping in five different countries and crossing the equator four times. Why? The idea was to age the whiskey like it was aged in days of old, sloshing around in the hull of a ship, getting exposed to the salt air and brine of the sea and the changes in temperature. The result is a delicious bottle of bourbon at a reasonable price that probably has more miles under its keel than you do. **\$65. Jefferson's, jeffersonsbourbon.com**



THE CLEANER

Scrubbing down the boat is never a joy, but the folks over at Shurhold are doing their best to make it easier with the new Combo Deck Brush. No more switching brush heads in and out depending on what surface you're cleaning—the Combo Brush combines longer soft-bristles for washing the boat with shorter medium-bristles for when you really need to get something clean. The harder you scrub, the harder the brush will clean. Shurhold seems to embrace the idea that sometimes, it's the little things that matter. **\$28.98. Shurhold Industries, shurhold.com**



IN FOCUS

Whether you're looking for the next mark, the entrance to a strange channel or scanning a mooring field in search of a home for the night, a good pair of binoculars is an essential part of your onboard kit. The Aruba 7X50 binoculars from West Marine have a high-index BAK-4 porro prism that produces a clear and bright image, and the binoculars are nitrogen-filled to prevent fogging up in wet conditions (which, on a boat, is often). The eyepieces are easily adjustable and can twist out from the body, making them comfortable for all kinds of different faces. Main focusing is done by the center knob, with an additional knob on the right ocular for micro tuning. **\$169.99. West Marine, westmarine.com**

MADE IN THE SHADE

Maui Jim's new Waterman sunglasses are designed specifically for on-the-water action. They feature lens vents to dry any water that is captured inside the lens (think sweat and spray) and provide excellent circulation to prevent the shades from fogging up. In addition to their comfortable design, they have an adjustable cushioned head strap to keep them on your head no matter what. Topping off all that, the Waterman line sports Maui's patented PolarizedPlus2 lenses that block out 100 percent of UV rays and 99.9 percent of glare (according to the company), and have a oleophobic coating that sheds water, repels smudges, and generally keeps you seeing clearly. **\$249. Maui Jim, mauijim.com**



SMOOTH OPERATOR

The Hi-Speed line of folding propellers from EWOL is for boats that sail fast, whether you do it with two hulls or one. The propellers are designed to keep their center of thrust aft and thus create a "fin effect" that keeps the propeller in a feathered position in most any conditions, even when the waterflow is disturbed due to speed or sea conditions. The makers say this feature allows for improved maneuverability and fuel savings. The Hi-Speed propellers are easy to install and adjust and are constructed from stainless steel super-alloys for strength and corrosion resistance. **Starting at \$2,800. EWOL, ewoltech.it**



You don't need a passport to enjoy a spectacular sailing vacation. **There are plenty of great places to charter right here in the States.** Whether you want to go **north, east or west**, you'll find fantastic cruising areas just waiting to be explored.

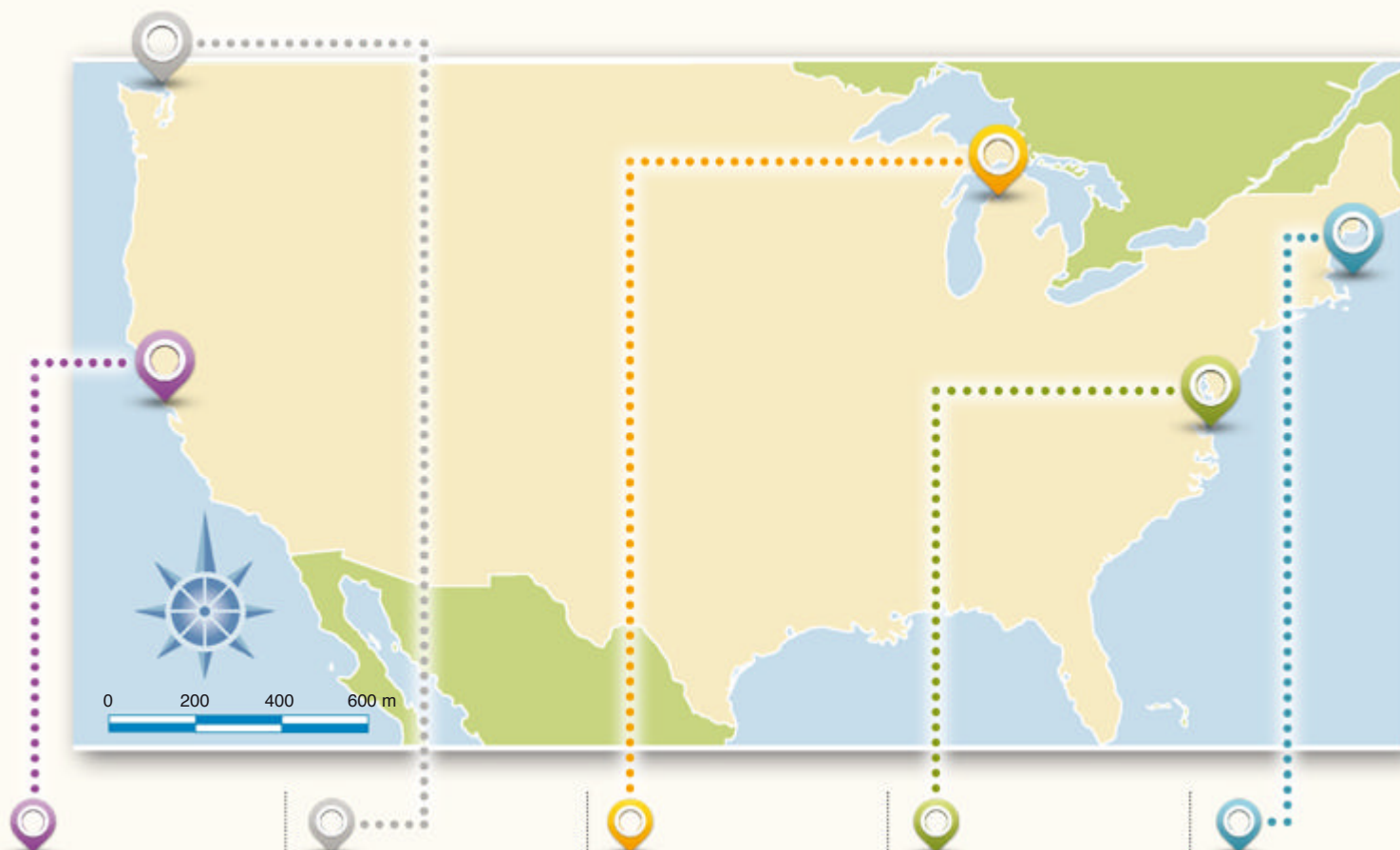
Here are five of them...



Doe Bay on Orcas Island,
a popular destination in
Washington's San Juan Islands

Home is where the boat is





SAN FRANCISCO BAY

BEST TIME TO GO

The weather is pretty mild all year, though it gets chilly in the spring. If you dress appropriately it's always a good time for sailing.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

In addition to the fog, there is plenty of commercial and ferry traffic to watch out for. Due to the area's geography, conditions can change quickly from calm to blustery.

ANCHORING & MOORING

North of San Francisco in the Marin County area there are several places to anchor or grab a slip.

CHARTER COMPANIES

Club Nautique
clubnautique.net

Modern Sailing School and Club
modernsailing.com

Pacific Yachting and Sailing
pacificsail.com

SAN JUAN ISLANDS

BEST TIME TO GO

June to October, but book early as August and September can be sold out way in advance.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Fog. If possible, charter a boat with radar.

ANCHORING & MOORING

Plenty of free anchoring available everywhere. Mid-week, slips can also be found at the main marinas.

CHARTER COMPANIES

Anacortes Yacht Charters
anacortesyachtcharters.com

Ship Harbor Yacht Charters
shipharboryachts.com

San Juan Sailing (Bellingham)
sanjuansailing.com

GRAND TRAVERSE BAY

BEST TIME TO GO

June through September are best, but for those who don't mind layering, "shoulder season" can be great.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

All-in-all a pretty easy and straightforward place to go sailing: navigation is line-of-site and there's little, if any commercial traffic. Fog can be a problem on occasion.

ANCHORING & MOORING

Plenty of free anchoring available everywhere. Mid-week especially, slips can also be found at the main marinas.

CHARTER COMPANIES

Great Lakes Sailing Co
greatlakessailingco.com

CHESAPEAKE

BEST TIME TO GO

May to September are the peak season. If you don't mind bundling up, April and October can be outstanding.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Shallows in the creeks and crab pots, which unlike their New England brethren have small, hard-to-see buoys.

ANCHORING & MOORING

Anchorage abounds, but slips can be scarce in the high season, so call ahead.

CHARTER COMPANIES

Annapolis Bay Charters
annapolisbaycharters.net

Cruise Annapolis
cruise-annapolis.com

Dream Yacht Charters
dreamyachtcharter.com

Fair Wind Sailing School
fairwindsailing.com

Horizon Yacht Charters
horizonyachtcharters.com

Sail Away Catamarans
sailawaycatamarans.com

NEW ENGLAND

BEST TIME TO GO

June through September. In July and August, these waters can be crowded. Locals know that September is a great time to cruise here.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Occasional fog, strong currents

ANCHORING & MOORING

You can pay \$2 or more a foot for a slip in the peak summer months, and moorings can be pricy too. Either way, you'll need to book ahead. Anchoring, thankfully, is still free.

CHARTER COMPANIES

Bareboat Sailing Charters
bareboatsailing.com

Bluenose Yachts
bluenoseyachts.com

Horizon Yacht Charters
horizonyachtcharters.com

Swift Yacht Charters
swiftyachts.com



SAN FRANCISCO BAY

All things to all sailors

If there's one thing all San Francisco Bay charters have in common, it's that they are so different. From the bay, you could just as easily find yourself in an urban marina walking to a Giants game as you could a picturesque Napa Valley dock walking to a wine tasting. Strong breezes, fog, commercial traffic, a bustling race scene and multiple bridges make this an ideal region for seasoned salts, especially those seeking mild weather year-round.

The "San Francisco Bay Area" refers to the estuary spanning 50 miles north-south between San Jose and San Pablo Bay, with an east-west span of between three and 12 miles. To the east, the bay transitions into the Delta, where the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers wind through 1,100 miles of cruiseable grounds. Each of these areas offers a distinct sailing experience.

THE URBAN: During the day, take in the astounding views under sail. In the evening, tuck into South Beach Harbor. This

bustling marina puts you in the heart of the city. You can walk to AT&T Park or dinghy to McCovey Cove, where fans have been known to catch a fly ball. Stroll along the historic Embarcadero to the Ferry Building where you'll find a collection of artisanal foods, flowers, clothing and wares—all regionally sourced. Pier 39 has a lively assortment of art, music and food. Fisherman's Wharf offers renowned seafood restaurants and ferry rides to Alcatraz—one of the most interesting tours you may ever experience.

THE FAMILY: After a night in Sausalito, make the sail to Angel Island State Park. Porpoises have returned to these waters following a 60-year hiatus, so keep a lookout. The docks on Angel Island are \$15 a day, first-come-first-served. A four-mile trail wraps around the hills providing great hiking. A café and oyster cantina offer delicious eats and live entertainment, and there



Cruising in the shadow of the famed Golden Gate Bridge never gets old

are barbecue pits galore. Before nightfall, when the ferries schlep the masses back to the mainland, make your way to the mooring field, also first-come-first-serve.

THE OENOPHILE: As you sail north through San Pablo Bay, the urban center makes way for the rolling, temperate hills of Napa. On the motorsail to Petaluma, you will pass the Petaluma Marsh Wildlife Area, home to an impressive number of migratory birds. Dockage in this quaint town is limited, but locals are welcoming. Petaluma is also home to the Lagunitas Brewery, so be sure to sample a pint of their "Somethin Somethin." Another option is to sail beneath the San Rafael Bridge and up the Napa River to the Napa Valley Marina. This trip requires bridge openings and tricky navigating, but will land you at the front door of warm, scenic and serene wine county.

THE DOWN-HOME: Traveling up the delta, you'll experience a great following breeze. The Central Valley, source of California's renowned harvest, is split between

the San Joaquin River to the south and the Sacramento River to the north. This is a different type of sailing—with bridge openings, tight channels and tricky navigation. Stock up on pool toys and bug spray before you go, and stick to the charts—it's common for newcomers to run aground. Downtown Benicia offers down-home charm, with a great farmers' market and live music through the high season. Old Sacramento offers 1,000 feet of riverfront docking, right in the Old West historic center. If you're looking for a shady spot to kick back, Steamboat Slough is for you.

THE RIVERIA: Just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, the seaside towns of Marin County offer the feel of a European Riviera. After spending your day sailing the bay and perhaps dipping under the Bridge for a taste of the roaring Pacific, you'll be happy to snug back ashore. Sausalito is great for shopping, strolling and eating, and Tiburon is home to the beloved Sam's Anchor Café, which boasts a superb view of the Golden Gate. —Meredith Laitos

Paddle a kayak over to McCovey Cove during a ball game and you just might catch a foul ball





SAN JUAN ISLANDS

The five best stopovers in the Pacific Northwest

The San Juan Islands are a part of the San Juan Archipelago in the Salish Sea off the coast of Washington state. You could spend a lifetime exploring the 450 islands, most of which are uninhabited, but on a weeklong charter with these five highlights on the itinerary, I've found I can't miss.

To set the mood, start with Friday Harbor on San Juan Island (23 nautical miles from charter bases in Anacortes) where friendly staff at the marina will find you a spot even if it means being side-tied three deep. Walk up to town with its variety of great restaurants, bars, and art galleries. Friday Harbor has a true Pacific Northwest vibe with live music pouring out of coffee houses and culture that is obviously tied to the water. It's also an easy overnight stop with everything available that you might have forgotten to provision.

Next, I like to head north about 12 miles to Orcas Island and the historic Rosario Resort and Moran Mansion museum. A local once told me, "If you haven't been to Rosario, you haven't been to the San Juans." I aimed the bow in that direction and, boy, was he right.

Shipbuilder and one-time Seattle mayor Robert Moran purchased 7,000 acres here in the early 1900s and built an Arts and Crafts style residence that is now a museum and open to the public. Moran's nautical background is evident in the furnishing and fixtures, and the house tour is exceptional. The famous music room features an Aeolian pipe organ, a Steinway grand piano and two mezzanine libraries overlooking a Tiffany chandelier. Christopher Peacock, accomplished musician and Rosario historian, presents a free concert a few days a week which includes music and original silent film footage from the *Phantom of the Opera* with Lon Chaney.

Now, let's turn back and head about 15 miles to the northern tip of San Juan Island to Roche Harbor, a marina with 377 slips. Listed on the National Register of Historical Sites, the Hotel de Haro, built in 1886, serves as the center of "town," which is only a few buildings. The hotel lobby is filled with old photographs that tell the story of this former lime-quarrying center, and in summertime the grounds are bursting with flowers. The local cuisine includes fresh fish, shellfish and crab, and if you're dining during the late summer sunset, you'll note that everyone pauses for the striking of the colors outside and to watch the sun dip over the horizon. Evening activities include performances in the open-air amphitheater, and during the day I like the self-guided tour through an outdoor sculpture garden and the McMillin Family Mausoleum.

From Roche, take a daysail out on the Haro Strait that separates the United States from Canada. This is an excellent best place to spot a pod of orcas as these beautiful animals travel up and down the channel, feeding and splashing. Local laws require that boats stay at least 100 yards away, but sometimes, if you're lucky, they'll swim right up to and around your boat. People line up in Roche to pay for whale watching tours, so if you see one of the boats, you can cozy up to them assuming they know where the orcas are that day.

Finally, I like to spice things up with a trip through Deception Pass, which separates Whidbey Island from Fidalgo Island about 28 miles from Roche. Although it's advisable to transit the pass only at slack water due to the strong currents, a thrilling ride is to be had if you go in with the current a few hours before. It's



like rafting the Colorado river as the water boils around you and the boat speeds up to 10 or 12 knots while nearly in idle. This is not a place to go sailing; you'll definitely want to make your transit under power. Once through the pass, you can tie up at a dock at Cornet Bay, where in August, you might catch a glimpse of the tall ships *Hawaiian Chieftain* and *Lady Washington* engaging in mock battles on the bay.

Chartering in the Pacific Northwest can be challenging, because the season is short, the wind is fluky and fog can show up any time, including in mid-August. For a quick jump into the action,

The view north from Anacortes (top); Crow Valley Pottery is just one example of the many hidden gems found on these islands

it may be best to charter out of Anacortes, which is close to these islands but a long ride from Seattle airport. Chartering out of Bellingham may be more convenient for anyone flying in, but you'll spend a few hours getting down to the cruising playground.

The San Juans are compact, so you could ostensibly hit all five highlights in five days. But oh, what a fun five days those will be.—**Zuzana Prochazka**



CHESAPEAKE BAY

A big and little body of water—all at the same time

Looks can be deceiving on the Chesapeake. It's a body of water than can be both intimate and absolutely enormous all at the same time: a cruising ground where you can enjoy a first-class meal one night and rough it on the hook the next, without ever having to sail more than a few miles. It's the kind of place that will continue to surprise even the saltiest of sailors after a lifetime of exploration.

Integral to any Chesapeake charter is the bay's deeply crenelated shoreline. Countless bays and creeks provide literally hundreds of anchorages large and small, not to mention the *raison d'être* for the dozens of shore side communities—also both large and small—that play such an important role in the life of the bay.

Ground zero for chartering and sailing in this part of the world is Annapolis, Maryland, home of the U.S. Naval Academy and a number of different charter companies, boatyards and new-boat sales offices—many of them in the quaint community of Eastport, on the other side of the mooring field in front of “Ego Alley,” the thin strip of water in front of the Annapolis harbormaster's office.

Annapolis itself makes for an excellent stop and is more

than worth the price of either a mooring or the motor in from the anchorage off the Naval Academy. (Or, if you can swing it, a slip at one of the town's many marinas.) For those who have only experienced the town as part of the annual boat show, Annapolis without crowds is a true gem, replete with historic buildings (including, of course, the Academy itself), quiet cobblestone streets and fine restaurants. Early spring and late fall, when most other cruisers have turned their attention elsewhere, can be an especially magical time.

Beyond Annapolis, there are any number of destinations within striking distance, ranging from urban hubs like Baltimore to untold nameless creeks. Directly to the east lies Kent Island, and to the east of that lie Eastern Bay and the town of St. Michaels—a community so steeped in tradition it has to be seen to be believed. Granted, at the height of the tourist season, getting a slip or a table at one of

the community's fine restaurants can be a challenge. But there's no beating the place for energy, and like Annapolis, in the off-season, the timeless quiet can be nothing less than surreal. Other great destinations along Maryland's Eastern Shore include Oxford and Cambridge—pleasant towns that boast marinas dotted with characteristic Bay-area boats, Main Streets lined with great shops and friendly people, and restaurants with mouth-watering local blue crabs, clams and oysters.

Meanwhile, directly south of Annapolis lies the historic Thomas Point screw-pile lighthouse, which originally dates back to 1825 and marks the shoal guarding the approaches to the South and Rhode Rivers, both of which offer a number of nooks and crannies where you can drop the hook for the night. Never mind the occasional powerboat that will drop by for a couple of hours and possibly play its music a bit too loud. They always seem to leave

as the sun goes down, leaving the sailors with the wooded shore and twinkling lights of the beach houses to themselves.

Beyond that, explore! If a particular sliver of blue toward the edge of the chart strikes your fancy, give it a look. Just be sure to take some care as you do. While the main channels in the Chesapeake are well marked—in large part to facilitate the passage of the bay's not insubstantial commercial traffic—things can get a bit dicey along the periphery, where dredging is nonexistent and the mud and silt have a way of piling up. I'll never forget the time a couple of buddies and I bumped along the bottom for what felt like a half-dozen boat lengths while reaching out of what we'd thought was a nice deep creek off Eastern Bay. Alas, the water in this part of the world is utterly opaque, so you're inevitably gunkholing by brute force. But hey, ain't that what life and chartering are supposed to be, an adventure?—**Adam Cort**

Annapolis is a true hub of sailing activity (below left); the bay's shore is steeped in history (below right)





GRAND TRAVERSE BAY

Getting away from it all off Michigan's Lower Peninsula

In his famed novel *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville observed that “those grand freshwater seas,” as he called the Great Lakes, “possess an ocean-like expansiveness...with many of its rimmed varieties of races and climes.”

Same goes for the charter possibilities, of which there are many. Far to the north, the adventurous can enjoy a true wilderness experience exploring Lake Superior's Apostle Islands. Farther south, there are the warm, shallow waters and beaches of Put-in-Bay and the other small islands at the western end of Lake Erie. And roughly midway in between is Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay, a narrow, but surprisingly large body of water just around the corner from the famed Straits of Mackinac and Mackinac Island.

Comprised of a pair of east and west arms, separated by the Old Mission Peninsula, Grand Traverse Bay measures some 30 miles north to south, from where it opens out onto Lake Michigan down to the town Grand Traverse. Although protected from the swells and occasionally severe storms found out on the open lake, the Bay can still experience some powerful conditions on its own—as I found out during a Fourth-of-July charter a few years ago beating into a chill, 25- to 30-knot northwester. Fortunately, the area is also dotted with islands and deeply indented with bays and protected anchorages, which provide many places to go and/or seek shelter, no matter what the conditions.

A short distance north-northeast of Traverse City—a well-established travel destination with plenty of places to provision—is heavily wooded Marion Island and Bowers Harbor, with Tucker Point providing excellent protection from pretty much every point of the compass other than due south.



Plenty of room to anchor in Suttons Bay (above); enjoying a quite summer evening in Bowers Harbor (right)

Northwest of that is Suttons Bay, both the town and bay itself, which offers equally good protection in every direction but the northeast. Beware though: while the sandy bottom at the head of the bay provides good holding, there are patches of weed that can easily foul even the best-set anchor, rendering it useless. North of that lie Omena and Northport bays, both good jumping-off points for those interested in venturing out onto Lake Michigan proper.

While on the subject of anchoring, in certain places the bottom drops off precipitously, making it necessary to nose right up into the shallows unless you want to put out a truly prodigious amount of rode. Fortunately, the water is crystal clear, so you should see the bottom coming up at you long before you find it with your keel. Beyond that, all rocks and shallows are clearly marked. On a sunny day in particular, there's absolutely



no excuse for running aground on Grand Traverse Bay!

Despite the fact that Grand Traverse is a heavily trafficked tourist center, complete with dozens of hotels, the bay itself remains magnificently rugged, providing a wonderful glimpse of the old time Great Lakes—back when these waters served as a highway for naval fleets and buck-skinned voyageurs. The rocky shoreline grows thick with pine; osprey, deer and other wildlife abound; and the northern sunsets have to be seen to be be-

lieved. Even on the evening of the Fourth of July, my crew and I had the place to ourselves.

The small community of Suttons Bay is also not to be missed. With its well-provisioned marina and quaint downtown, complete with grocery stores, and brightly colored coffee shops and galleries, it's a kind of cross between a Down East fishing village and the Bahamas, all in a North Country style: perfect for those looking for an adventure in their own backyard.—**Adam Cort**



NEW ENGLAND

Savor the delights of Cape Cod & southern New England

To the uninitiated, chartering a boat in southern New England doesn't have anywhere near the same romantic appeal as, say, sailing in the Caribbean. But once you've bitten the proverbial bullet and booked a boat there anytime between late May and the end of September, you'll know why the local sailors love these waters so much. This is the beginning of one of the country's—no, the world's—great cruising grounds, stretching from the tip of Long Island Sound all the way up the Maine coast to the Bay of Fundy.

Leaving Maine out of the equation this time around, your only problem will be narrowing down the area you want to visit. Since bareboat charter companies are concentrated south of Cape Cod, that decision is kind of made for you. I say "kind of" because the Cape and Islands offer more beautiful anchorages and attractive destinations than could ever be squeezed into a week's cruise, and though most of Long Island Sound is kind of dull, there are some very pretty harbors there too.

Take a boat out of Newport, Rhode Island, and once you've

sailed past Newport's waterfront mansions and out of Narragansett Bay, you can head for Cuttyhunk and the Elizabeth Islands, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket; if you've elected to charter out of Mystic, Connecticut, the welcoming embrace of Block Island's Great Salt Pond is only a few hours away, and from there it's a logical hop to the tip of Long Island and the delights of Sag Harbor. From there, a leisurely sail across Long Island sound takes you to the beautiful harbors of Essex and Stonington. Wind up the week with a visit to Newport.

For me, the real heart of southern New England cruising is Buzzards Bay, where the breeze honks up to 15-20 knots on summer afternoons, offering glorious sailing and a great choice of anchorages and harbors to duck into when the sun gets low—New Bedford, Padanaram and Marion on the western shore; Cuttyhunk or one of the other Elizabeths to the east.

Most of this little island chain is owned by the Forbes family, but there's no restriction on anchoring off them—Hadley's Harbor, on Nonamesset Island, is especially lovely. Cuttyhunk's inner harbor



Newport's Castle Hill Inn is a great place to watch the boats sail in and out of Narragansett Bay

gets crowded on summer weekends, but there's a great anchorage outside. If you're lucky, the famous Raw Bar boat will raft up alongside, and the crew will shuck as many oysters as you can eat for your evening appetizer.

The time will come when you want to slip through the islands and head for Martha's Vineyard, which will require you to experience the full force of the tidal current as you slip through Woods Hole, a small gap between the mainland and the Elizabeths. You'll have little time to check out the famous oceanographic institute as you ride the current that rips through this tricky dogleg at up to 6 knots—it's a bit of a buttock-clenching experience the first time you do it!

Everyone anchors or picks up a mooring at Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard, and with good reason—it's the epicenter of the island's maritime life. Should you tire of the bustle and you draw south of 6 feet, slip into Lake Tash-

moo, but make sure your anchor is well set. It's easy to embarrass yourself in this shallow anchorage, but once dug in, it's a great spot to enjoy a gorgeous New England sunset and a quiet night.

From there, be prepared to face yet more choices. Do you cross over to the mainland and visit Hyannis? Head for Nantucket for a dose of history and a chance to mingle with the rich and famous? Or just daysail out of the Vineyard and enjoy some lazy beach days? The waters south of the Cape are warmed by the Gulf Stream, making swimming an altogether more enjoyable experience than in the frigid waters of Maine. (Don't let the fact that *Jaws* was filmed on the Vineyard put you off).

All in all, the sometimes challenging currents and the robust sea breezes make chartering in these waters ideal for more experienced sailors who are after a memorable boating experience. Call me biased, but I love sailing in New England.

—Peter Nielsen **S**

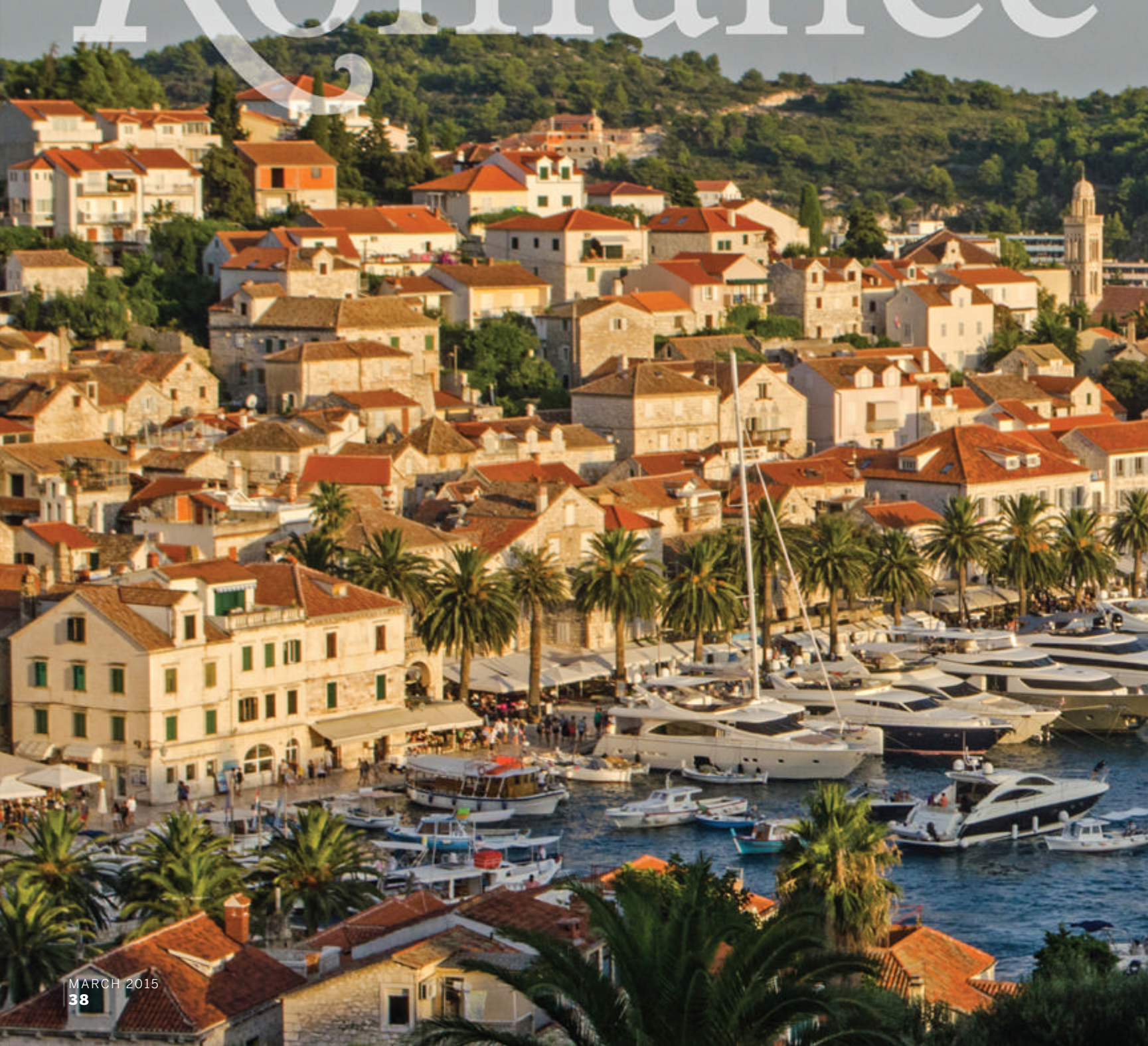
Quiet anchorages, nice beaches and quaint coastal towns seem to be around every corner when you're cruising the New England coast



SUMMER
CHARTER
SPECIAL

story & photos by
John Robison IV

Dalmatian Romance



A group of charterers
enjoy nine days in
southern Croatia
on a voyage of discovery



The port city of Hvar basks in
the glow of a perfect sunset



Vana under sail—note the lighthouse in the distance; the Dalmatian Coast, though rocky, is well marked

It felt as if we were dreaming as we left our Moorings 40 catamaran *Vana* tucked safely in a pristine, deserted cove and motored our dinghy into the village of Pasadur, on the west end of the island of Lastovo. My shipmate Nicola and I were nearing the end of a nine-day cruise in Dalmatia, the southern part of Croatia, and had found ourselves in a place forgotten by the 20th century. We'd discovered a lost land where days slipped by at their leisure.

Our starting point had been The Moorings base in Marina Agana, about 20 miles south of Split, the largest city in Dalmatia. A few days after that we had left the beautiful chaos of bustling Hvar harbor to strike out for more isolated anchorages. It was late August, the end of high season in Croatia. I'd already spent two summers in Croatia working as a trip leader for a travel company, and knew the area well. The second time round I'd come to love Dalmatia in particular, the rugged southern stretch of Croatian coast, the length of which is peppered with over 1,200 islands.

Nicola and I had met the previous November at the Sailor's Bar in Gran Canaria. Her boat was tied up a few spots down from the Hallberg-Rassy 40 *Windleblo*, aboard which I was serving as crew. Every time I walked by I'd say hello, and we'd chat a bit. After our respective passages across the Atlantic, we reunited in St. Lucia, spent a few weeks together and decided we probably ought to see each other again. New York, Vermont, Prague and suddenly I was asking her if she'd skipper *Vana* for the week—a perfect opportunity to actually spend time sailing together.

Vana was a lovely boat, well kept and well equipped. We provisioned at Studenac, a 10-minute walk away through the boatyard, and then returned to the charter office for the skipper's briefing: an informal coffee conversation with Moorings expert Daniela that dramatically improved our understanding of these intricate cruising grounds, with their many rocky islets and channels.

Among other things, Daniela explained to us that in summer the weather in Dalmatia is variable, with a number of different local winds to be aware of. The *bura*, for example, blows down from the mountains—typically out the northeast—as air cooled high on the slopes of the Dinaric Alps rushes down to the warmer, lower pressure air at sea level. It usually lasts for no more than three days, but can be quite gusty and kick up some serious chop on the usually benign Adriatic, especially in the narrow channels between islands and at night.

The *mistral* also blows from the northwest, and is a consistent, warm, friendly breeze in this part of the Med during the summer. It usually picks up mid-morning,

peaks mid-afternoon and dies in the evening. The *jugo*, on the other hand, is a southeasterly wind that typically brings clouds and rain.

In terms of navigation, the tides are negligible (as is the case throughout the Mediterranean) and the islands of the Dalmatian coast tend to plunge dramatically into the sea, so that the water is usually quite deep very close to shore. The bottom is often rocky, which can make for challenging anchoring. Setting a shoreline or two on the beach is often a good idea to keep your boat from swinging and ensure the hook stays set.

Later we sailed to western Šolta, where we spent our first night anchored in a narrow snake of an inlet just south of Maslinica. The bottom of this slackwater cove was soft mud, unusual in this typically rocky-bottomed region, and the anchor held just fine, making for a nice relaxed start to our adventure.

ESCAPING HISTORY

For the past 20 years Croatia has struggled to face down a demon: the war that broke out in the early 1990s when the country declared independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and was invaded by the Yugoslav National Army (an invasion



that was ultimately repulsed). However, those tourists who have come back in recent years have discovered one of the most striking and pristine landscapes in Mediterranean Europe, complemented by welcoming locals eager to share their country's beauty.

In Croatia old men still offer strangers the figs they pick on late August mornings as they walk slowly home to sit and drink homemade wine all afternoon. Tiny fishing boats still putter out every night to bring to market some of the finest tuna the Med has to offer. The undiscovered still exists in Croatia—what has been lost is waiting to be found by those intrepid enough to search for it.

In many ways the country's complexity was

reflected in our itinerary. Setting sail from the quiet harbor in Šolta and arriving in Hvar, for example, provided an incredible study in contrasts, both aboard and in terms of the scenery.

Snagging a mooring ball, we squeezed into a line of yachts Med-moored along the dock, after which some co-workers and a gaggle of our Balkan friends turned up to enjoy one of the hottest summer destinations in the Med. That day we visited two of my favorite eateries, Palmizana Meneghello and Mizarola. Then in the evening our Croatian friends Mato and Julijana Brautović arrived and we all headed to dinner in Milna, under the olive groves at charming Konoba Lambik. We left the Brautovićs "for one more drink," but it was not until 0700 that they made it back to *Vana*, a sopping Mato and a giggling Julijana clambering aboard clumsily trying not to wake us after a rare all-nighter.

When it came time to take on water, the harbor wall was already jammed with yachts tied stern-to, and the chop kicked up by the southerly *jugo*

It's party time for the crew with *Vana* Med-moored in the port of Hvar





Croatia abounds with historic architecture, like that found in the city of Dubrovnik (top left); the pristine waters off the Croatian coast make swimming a pleasure pretty much anywhere (bottom left)



had the boats bouncing and bobbing restlessly. The harbormaster had asked us to stand by, so Nicola had to spend some time dodging fishing boats, water taxis and other cruisers as we waited for a spot to open up. Eventually, though, we filled our water tanks and were ready to go.

BACK IN TIME

Setting out from Hvar for the island of Vis marked what Nicola and I saw as the true start of our adventure. We'd left most of our revelers in Hvar, so that only Julijana, Mato and a dear Slovenian friend of mine, Jerry Moon, remained. I'd only seen Vis from the slopes of

Hvar and Brač, perched on the Adriatic's horizon. Lastovo was a place I'd only heard about in stories. In my mind these were mystical places, forgotten by the modern world, "the Mediterranean as it once was." For most of the 20th century Vis and Lastovo were used as naval bases and were closed to foreigners. Only in 1992 did the military abandon this outpost in the Adriatic, leaving behind a place gone dormant.

The sail from Hvar to Vis was brilliant, a beam reach before a Force 4 southerly breeze. Mato was out cold in his cabin, but the rest of us enjoyed meandering through the islands on the picturesque southeast coast of Vis. Nicola paid special attention here—although well charted, some rocks hardly break the surface and it pays to give all hazards a wide berth.

Peeking into the inlet at Stiniva, we found steep cliffs framing a narrow cove that opens at the last second onto a hidden pebbly beach, accessible only by dinghy. However, the bottom was untenably rocky, so we hopped two coves east, to Vela Travnica. Here, our plow-style anchor caught on the first try, after which I swam over some shorelines to make *Vana* secure as Mato finally decided to show his weary face.

Despite his condition, Mato unhesitatingly leapt into the refreshing water, then hopped onto the dinghy for a fishing outing on the not-so-benign sea. Meanwhile, Nik, Jerry and I trooped over to Mala Travnica, where we'd heard a bearded hermit was living. He was nowhere to be found and the konoba, or café, was closed, but the cove was one of the most

CRUISE NOTES

WE CHARTERED WITH THE MOORINGS

(moorings.com). April through October is tourist season in Croatia. Typically April, May and October are rainier, while July and August represent peak season, meaning charter fees are higher and the nightlife is more exciting.

FOOD PRICES are roughly comparable to the United States. The best value will be found on the mainland at the larger discount stores—Lidl, Getro and Konzum. For a midweek provisioning on the islands, most towns also have a small grocery store or two.

MANY CAFES & BARS HAVE WI-FI

and pay-as-you-go SIM cards are inexpensive and easy to find. Our Moorings charter boat had Wi-Fi onboard, including limited data, with the option to purchase more on board. This made it easy to check meteo.hr, Croatia's best weather website.

THE MOORINGS

in Croatia operates out of Marina Agana, located in the town of Marina, less than an hour by bus from the main terminal in Split or 25 minutes from the Split airport by taxi. The town is small but has all the amenities needed to cast off for a week of sailing.

CHARTS FOR THE AREA ARE ACCURATE,

and while there is plenty of yacht traffic during the high season, there is only a moderate amount of commercial traffic to contend with.



Vana at anchor in Vela Travná: note the two stern lines running to shore

beautiful—and isolated—I’ve seen in Croatia.

The customary Dalmatian remedy for most any affliction is a shot of rakija—brandy, made by distilling the skins and pulp left over from wine-making—and a dunk in the sea. I tend to ignore the former, but have always enjoyed the latter (as did Mato).

The prevailing currents of the Med flow into the eastern Adriatic and up the Dalmatian coast. The water slowly moves counterclockwise around the Adriatic basin, finally flowing south out along Italy’s smooth eastern shore. This current, combined with the great care Croatian people exhibit toward the sea, make for the cleanest and most swimmable water I have found in all of Europe. I’ve only seen seawater of such a vivid ultramarine blue in the middle of the Atlantic and in the British Virgin Islands.

Our second day in Vis we awoke extra early, waited over coffee for Mato to come back from octopus-hunting, and set sail at sunrise for Biševo, a small island a few miles southwest. We wanted to visit the famous Blue Cave, which is accessed by a small narrow tunnel. We arrived around 0815 and set about getting the dinghy down to motor over. On our way we encountered the harbormaster, who informed us that we’d be required to pay upon our return, a lucky break because everyone else is required to visit the grotto aboard of-

ficial tour boats.

The five of us in our small dinghy rowed into the opening, unsure of what to expect. After about 30 feet we turned the corner and collectively caught our breaths as we found ourselves entirely alone in a spacious grotto lit brilliant cerulean blue by the sun streaming through a huge underwater cavern mouth.

“Well, we’re here, might as well...” I said and slipped over the edge of the dinghy into the perfect, cool, backlit water, where I was soon joined by Nicola, Mato, and Jerry Moon. Alas, on returning to *Vana* we were informed that swimming is strictly prohibited and that security cameras had caught us red-handed. Fortunately, Julijana’s native bluster came out swinging, and we were let off scot free to skip across the channel to Komiza for a long nap on a mooring ball.

One of Julijana’s fabulous meals and a night of deep sleep later found Nicola and me waving goodbye to the Central Europeans as they toted their bags down the dock towards a waiting taxi. We’d reserved the last five days of our charter for ourselves alone, a dream come true and a chance to answer some questions that lingered in our minds.

A TIMELESS FINISH

As soon as we said our goodbyes we motored out of Komiza Bay and sailed dead downwind

to Lastovo, our final destination. As we did so we slipped into a daze, unable to believe how perfect everything was. Just off the uninhabited isle of Mrčara on the west end of Lastovo we set anchor in a perfectly protected cove with no one else in sight. A long snorkel confirmed our suspicion—the environment was as pristine below the surface as it was above.

Like in a dream, experiencing Lastovo seemed both eternal and instantaneous. We took a scooter for three hours and rode almost every road on the island. This was it. We’d reached our destination, intended and not: Lastovo and a state of being that was utterly pure, present and uncontrived. Nicola and I fell in love then and there, in the hills and coves, racing along the dirt roads.

Eventually, of course, necessity called us back to the mainland via the halcyon southwest coast of Korčula, where we were gingerly wrested from our waking slumber. A sudden storm blew in and whipped us, reefed, across the channel from Brač and safely to *Vana*’s home. In our last moments aboard, Dalmatia seemed to implore us to stay, begged us to take refuge in a narrow inlet and wait out the storm. The rain started moments before we hopped on our bus home to Dubrovnik. **S**

John Robison IV grew up sailing a Flying Scot and has since graduated to sailing much farther afield



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Rally Time

By Wally Moran

SAIL's inaugural ICW Snowbird Rally brings cruisers together for a trip down one of America's best waterways

I have over 20 trips on the ICW to my credit, but I never imagined that I would be leading a fleet of sailboats, 18 of them in fact, south down the Ditch. But there they were, heading out from Hampton, Virginia, everything from a Macgregor 26 to a charter catamaran to an Irwin 44, each of them carrying every sort of crew, plus a couple of kids and no fewer than seven dogs—and two cats.

All of this came about as the result of a discussion between *SAIL*'s editor-in-chief Peter Nielsen and myself, plus two years of planning and work by the *SAIL* staff. Nothing like this had been done before, so we had nothing to guide us and no real idea of how it would work out. What were we thinking?

A lot of the planning was predicated on a few things we knew for certain: snowbird sailors want to get south safely, with a minimum of stress and maximum fun. These were givens, but still there was a considerable amount of guesswork involved. For professional guidance, we brought in Mark and Diana Doyle of "On the Water Chartguides." We knew they, in turn, wanted some backup in the event there were

mechanical issues underway. So we brought Tom Hale, former Technical VP at ABYC, aboard as our "Scotty."

We had thought our crews would be mostly retired professionals, with limited sailing experience. However, the group we found awaiting us on the docks at Hampton was anything but. There were two young families, each with a child (and dogs); several crews who were running some sort of business from their boats while underway, including a marine supply business; and an assortment of retired government employees, nurses, businesspeople, a former mayor of a

Canadian city, a submariner and a PR specialist, to name a few.

There was only one couple with minimal sailing or cruising experience, and their homeport was just a few miles from our starting point in Hampton. A couple of crews had already travelled well over 1,000 miles just to get to Hampton, coming from the Great Lakes and the Northeast. So there was no lack of competence.

Why did people sign up? For many, it was the social aspect of the rally, the opportunity to make new friends to take the place of those they were leaving behind.

Remarks such as, "We have made some lifelong friendships" and "We will be in contact with our new friends for many years to come," were frequently heard following the rally. Several crews have already made plans to explore new destinations with other rally participants. Some hoped to meet up with one another "in some exotic place." The fun and friendships are continuing.

For others, the rally provided "expert guidance and support" on the ICW, which none of the participants had previously transited. Then there were Jan and Stan Eure on *AdventEure*, a Hunter 33, who told me they came along for the parties!

And so they did, especially Stan. Few of us will forget the evening in St. Augustine when Stan and his alter ego, Steve Beringer from *Wind Dancer*, serenaded us with their rendition of "Goodnight Sweetheart," or the night in Southport, North Carolina, when they had a mock yelling match while we were dining in a nice restaurant. Stan and Steve are both big men, well over 6 feet tall, so when these two get going, it's an event of major

Clockwise, from upper left: *Scout*, a Pearson Invictus, sailed by Brian and Tara Flanagan; rafted four deep at the Dismal Swamp Welcome Center; Jack Ashton and Penny Fuller on the dock in Charleston, SC; Mark and Diana Doyle heading out from Titusville; *Adagio* picking up a mooring in Fernandina Beach; Leanne and Shawn Hamill in Coconut Grove; finding an anchorage in Titusville; fun times at the party in St. Augustine. Right, Steve and Barbara Kurtzman are all smiles at a rally potluck





proportions, not to mention hysterically funny.

Of course, I should have known right from the get-go what was ahead, given that our snowbirds organized an impromptu Halloween party on the dock the night before we were to leave, at O dark:30. What were they thinking? Just one look at Warren's costume (*Adagio*, Catalina 42) told me this group was ready to play.

Lest readers think this was nothing more than a "floating party," as one Facebook follower deemed it (while wishing he were along), let's be clear, there was a serious side, too.

As Jan tells us, "Our trip was full of firsts: first time anchoring, first time using our dinghy and propane motor, first time cooking on the stove with our brand new pots, first raft-up, first time in a lock, first time waking up in fog, first time down the ICW! Stayed in so many marinas. We were given star treatment in many locations."

The star treatment, indeed. In Beaufort, South Carolina, local yacht club members greeted us and took some of us out shopping or simply to tour the town. The Beaufort Chamber of Commerce also rolled out the red carpet, hosting an amazing dinner for all of us at Saltus Grill. This high-end restaurant on the Beaufort waterfront served us the best oysters I've ever had, an amazing shrimp and grits dish, and lots of other goodies, including excellent wines and craft beers. We were welcomed by Mayor Billy—no last name, it's a Southern custom—and were made to feel incredibly welcome.

Chuck and Linda Reed (*Silent Dream*, Catalina 36) put it this way: "Our host couple, who took us everywhere we needed to go, were there (at Saltus Grill) and the food was awesome! We met so many wonderful people at this party, and they were thrilled to have the SAIL rally in their



town." We were also treated to a Thanksgiving potluck dinner at Beaufort's Ladies Island Marina.

Circe, sailed by Jack Ashton and Penny Fuller, just north of Elizabeth City, NC

Last but not least, we got to tour *Freedom*, a 1926, 104-foot Mathis motor-yacht and sistership the USS *Sequoia*, a beautiful classic yacht that has been host to presidents and dignitaries from Hoover to Reagan.

Beaufort wasn't the only place where we received a royal welcome. Southport and Elizabeth City, North Carolina, also hosted parties for us, and again the mayors of both towns came out to greet us. Southport even produced a written proclamation welcoming us to their town. Several marinas we stopped at also hosted parties.

Farther south, the folks from the St. Augustine Cruisers Net put on an evening of entertainment for us. Unfortunately, the wind and waves were

RALLY STOPS



During our seven-week odyssey, the Snowbird Rally stopped in many marinas, anchorages, towns and cities. Here's a quick look at a few of them, in no particular order.

FERNANDINA BEACH—the first stop in Florida and the first really warm weather of our Rally. Despite a somewhat industrial waterfront, the downtown is lovely, with many great pubs and restaurants. The Rallyers found all of them I believe. Well worth spending time here, as unlike further south, the town isn't overrun with tourists.

PECK LAKE—a gorgeous, quiet anchorage just a short distance south of the St. Lucie inlet and a few steps over the dunes to the Atlantic beaches. Well worth spending a few days for some chillaxin' after a long haul to get here. You can hear the ocean at night from your boat.

LAKE SYLVIA—like Peck Lake, not really a lake, more of a wide spot on the road in Ft. Lauderdale. Many cruisers hole up here waiting for a weather window to the Bahamas. A lot of the rally boats stopped here and discovered the joys of dinghying to and from the Raw Bar, ferrying groceries back from the nearby grocery store, and just plain hanging out with friends.

ELIZABETH CITY—known as the Rose Buddy stop and the 'Harbor of Hospitality,' Elizabeth City gives roses to the women on boats staying (for free) at the town docks.

SOUTHPORT—The town fêted us with a wine and cheese party, and the mayor gave us a proclamation welcoming us to their town. Southport has many lovely homes within walking distance of the harbor, easy provisioning and some great restaurants. Did I mention free dockage, too?

DISMAL SWAMP WELCOME CENTER—our first stop. We were rafted out four deep on the docks, it was freezing cold, and everyone had a great time exploring while we sat out some really nasty weather on the Albermarle Sound.

DOWRY CREEK MARINA—on the Pungo River, Dowry Creek is a popular stop with many cruisers. It's very well protected and close to Belhaven if you need to provision. They put on an amazing potluck dinner for us, and Brenda (onboard *L'Attitude*) provided some amazing desserts.

NEW BERN—not actually on the ICW, we attended the Southbound Cruisers Rendezvous held here. Some great speakers, and for those who got to explore the town, it's a really nice place. For those into trivia, Pepsi Cola was created here, the original drugstore still standing as a museum to that.



Clockwise from top left: A skipper's meeting, one of many held during the ICW Rally to prepare cruisers for the journey; a shot of all the rally members during the end-of-the road party; Ron, Cindy and Connor Boudah on *Akula*, a Hunter Legend out of Ontario; Daeyton and Leanne Hamill coming into the dock



so bad in the mooring field that night several of the group were unable to return to their boats and ended up bunking with fellow ralliers. This dampened no one's spirits, although Tara, trapped for the night onboard *Scout*, a Pearson Invicta, with three-legged Pickles and Phinneas, a grouchy dachshund, might not have agreed.

There were so many individual highlights during the rally, and everyone has their own special memories. Jack Ashton and Penny Fuller, sailing a Gulfstar 44, did an overnight offshore and ended up anchoring at 0800 off the national park on Georgia's Cumberland Island.

"Penny and I went below to get some sleep. Within minutes we were woken by knocking on the hull and Mike Sturgeon's voice saying "There's time enough to sleep when you're dead!" Beautiful beaches, wine, cheese, armadillos and wild ponies awaited us."

Chuck and Linda found that their most memorable moment was at Dismal Swamp: "Rafted four deep with no electric and frost on everything in the morning. This was our coldest night ever on the boat!" Jan remembers the Dismal Swamp too: "I will also remember the bone-chilling cold. My home was 15 minutes away. I was tempted to call for a ride!"

Several people mentioned that they very much enjoyed Rob Peek, the legendary Dismal Swamp lock-tender, and the presentation he gave on the history of the Dismal Swamp Canal.

Chuck also said: "Another memorable moment was finally reaching warm weather at Ft. Lauderdale. This day made all the others before it that were cold well worth it. We finally made it to real Florida weather, and we broke out the shorts and swimsuits and put away the fleece-lined pants, sweaters, gloves and ear muffs. We almost didn't recognize some of our fellow rally members once they were wearing a lot less clothes."

A cold snap is part of a trip south, by the way, and we warned everyone to bring some winter clothing. Unless you leave well before November, you're likely to get at least one blast of cold weather while cruising the ICW. Several ralliers mailed their winter clothing back home after arriving at Coconut Grove in Miami.

For others, the rally was more of a personal accomplishment. Shawn Hamill (*Ryajen*, Beneteau 39) had this to say: "When we started, we were a ragtag group, me, my teenage son and newish wife. My son left halfway through, just before we were about to strangle each other, but we got



The fleet heads through one of the many bridges found on the ICW



to know each other better than we ever expected. It was tougher than we imagined, because of the unexpected weather, but more fun, more rewarding, and more satisfying than I could have imagined.”

Jan Eure discovered that “...we became better sailors with so many different experiences under our belt.”

One of those experiences was learning how to dock in strong currents. Even some experienced boaters were caught off-guard. Typically, my two co-leaders, Tom Hale and Mark Doyle, would be among the first to arrive at a marina and would assist arriving crews. On leaving, crews would assist one another, and I would leave last when everyone was safely underway. While there were a few anxious moments, as there always are when docking in new places, this worked well, and by the end of the rally all of the crews were quite comfortable docking.

No one ever told Stan Eure that sailboats don't typically back into slips, however, and since Jan needed the boarding ramp on their boat to get onto the dock, that's how he did it. There's a video on the rally's Facebook page of Stan roaring backwards into a slip at a fast clip and nailing it like a pro. We all marveled at his skill, particularly since Stan and Jan were the “newbies” in our group.

Not all of our experiences were good ones, but even the bad ones led to some great memories. One very special moment concerned the anchor that Mantus Anchors had offered as a prize.

Ron and Cindy Boudah and their 7-year-old son, Connor, on *Akula*, a Hunter 37, lost their new anchor in the Mile Hammock anchorage at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. No amount of dragging could recover it, so they bent on a second, less effective anchor, and on they went.

A few days later the drawing for the Mantus anchor was held at Osprey Landing, on the Waccamaw River in South Carolina. We had just finished a potluck supper and everyone was having fun. I was secretly going to rig the draw so that *Akula* would win and replace their new and

expensive anchor. Then I thought: “This group, they're pretty amazing. Let's let karma do its thing.” I asked young Connor to do the draw. He pulled out a ticket and handed it to me.

The winner was Wendell Johnson on *Virginia*, the Macgregor 26. He stood up and, unprompted, announced that he was giving the anchor to *Akula* since they'd lost theirs. Everyone cheered and a couple of us, well, we had to surreptitiously wipe away a tear.

On our first day out, Rob and Denise Figs on *Love and Luck*, an Irwin 44, had their prop shaft break and lost their anchor. They were towed into Atlantic Yacht Basin for repairs, where they worried about rejoining the rally, as they would be several days behind.

Tom Hale consulted with them and the AYBC, and *Love and Luck* was back in the water a few days later, problems solved. They raced to rejoin us, only to run aground two miles short of where the fleet was anchored, earning them a new nickname: *Love and Luckless*.

Surprisingly, while there were several mechanical problems during the trip, everyone made it south on time, although *Akula* was towed into Dinner Key Marina in Miami with a bad alternator. Understand, however, that they did this so as not to miss the rally wrap-up party at Coconut Grove Sailing Club.

Ah, the wrap-up party! We gathered earlier in the day at the sailing club's beautiful facility for one last briefing, this one from Peter Nielsen of *SAIL*, about offshore sailing and island destinations. You'd think, after 49 days and seven previous briefings on ICW tactics, that this group would have been tired of this sort of thing, but they kept coming back for more.

That night at the party, there were smiles everywhere you looked, laughter until tears were streaming and bellies hurting, and lots of caring and sharing. The party proved that this was much more than just a boat cruise. **S**

Wally Moran is a contributing editor to *Sail* and lives aboard *Gypsy Wind*, his 34ft Dufour, cruising between Canada and the Caribbean

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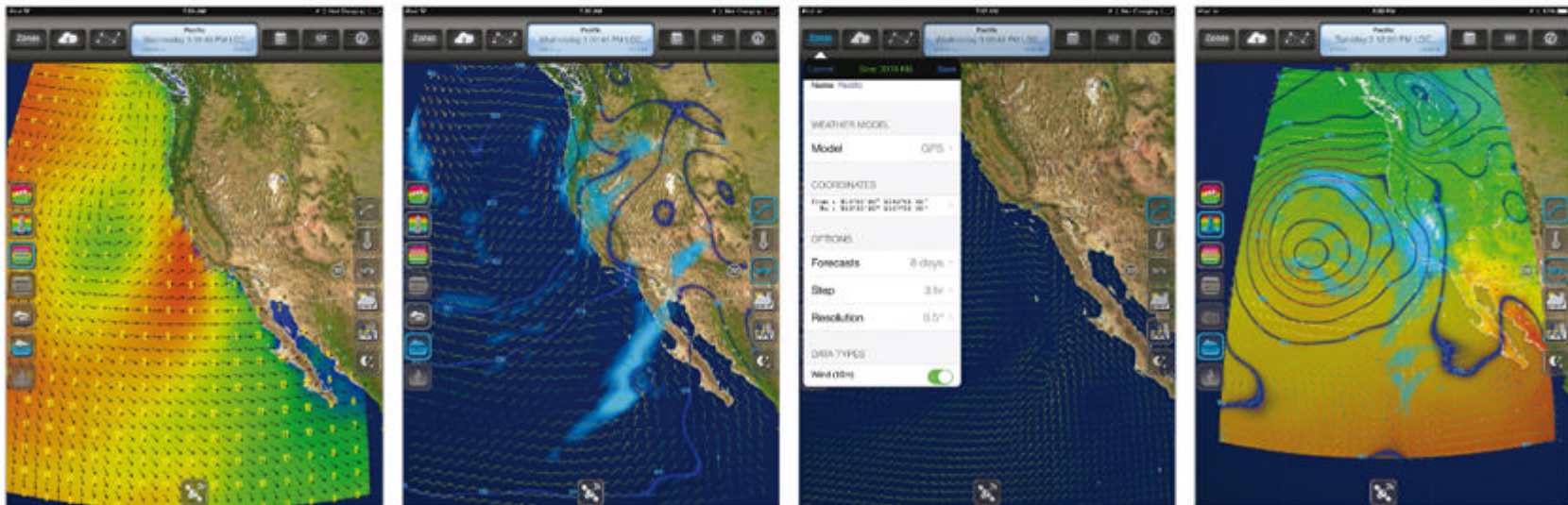
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Take the Weather With You

A new star among the constellation of weather apps

By Donald A. McLennan



On a recent voyage I used Weather 4D to view National Weather Service (NWS) Global Forecast System (GFS) weather prediction data, commonly distributed as GRIB files. Of the myriad apps that can be used to display GRIB files, I found Weather 4D to be the most useful way to download and review NOAA's GFS model GRIB data over cellular or WiFi networks. What sets it apart is the stunning layered display of data elements and its ability to project changes over time, similar to an animated video display. This is a brilliant app that shows wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, temperature, wave height, period and direction, current speed and direction, precipitation and cloud cover.

Weather 4D uses "weather zones" to define the data included in each GRIB file. This zone definition includes the duration of the weather forecast—1 to 8 days—forecast projections in 3-, 6-, 12- or 24-hour increments and a grid resolution of 0.5, 1 or 2 degrees. Data elements include wind speed and direction 10 meters above mean sea level, pressure, precipitation, temperature, waves and ocean current. Zone definitions determine the size of the file downloaded and are dependent on the area size, forecast options and weather elements. Note that

large files may take a long time to download and could exceed your cellular plan data limit.

Wind speed can be displayed with traditional wind barbs or as a colored gradient. (A half barb indicates 5 knots, one long barb is 10 knots, two barbs is 20 knots, etc.) Barometric pressure is displayed using continuous blue isobars with labels or in a 3D mode, with highs and lows represented as peaks and valleys on a 3D surface. Wave data includes both wave direction and period, as obtained from FNMOC WW3 Global or Euro. Temperature and rain are shown as colored gradients. Each data element is represented in separate layers. Multiple layers can be combined by selecting the item(s) and display options for some stunning visual presentations.

To visualize changing conditions, Weather 4D allows you to scroll through a weather forecast over its selected timeframe. As you do so the various weather data overlays also change, allowing you to easily visualize the evolving conditions. Each layer has several settings that allow you to customize the display to highlight the weather conditions you are most interested in. This is especially useful for tracking weather systems or noting changes in wind speed and direction.

Due to the fact that a virtually unlimited number of screen-display combinations are available, the screen can become quite busy. During our recent voyage, for example, we regularly monitored the wind speed and direction, barometric pressures in the area, and wave height and direction. Toggling between temperature, clouds and forecast rain provided yet more information.

With so many features and options at your disposal, Weather 4D can seem overly complex, especially in the beginning. With this in mind when first working with the app, I recommend using a single layer and then experimenting with the display options. If they make an updated version, I would like to see them add a setting for high/low colored gradients, which would make it easier to visualize the pressure systems. All in all though, for recreational sailors and coastal cruisers, Weather 4D provides a beautiful way to manage and view GRIB files. I give Weather 4D 4½ stars. Weather 4D is available on iOS for \$10.99. 

Name: Weather 4D & Weather 4D Pro iOS

Available on: iOS & Android devices (weather4d.com/en)

Price: \$10.99 & \$33.99 (Pro)

Score: ★★★★★



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A New COAT

By Jim Seidel

Part 1: How to
prepare your boat
for a new gelcoat

So, the gelcoat on your boat is looking chalky and faded. You've cleaned, compounded and waxed, and it looks good for a while, but the chalkiness returns—maybe the red accent stripe that used to look so good looks pink, or the dark blue bootstripe is now baby blue. If so then it's time to think about refinishing the gelcoat.

TOOLS FOR THE JOB

Here is a down and dirty list of what you'll need to take on the job yourself

**30ft sailboat waterline to gunwale
will approximately require:**

- ☐ 1½ Gallons of Primer
- ☐ 2–3 Gallons of High Build Primer
- ☐ Fairing compound as needed

SUPPLY LIST

- ☐ High Build Primer \$100–\$125 per mixed gal
- ☐ Fairing Compound \$110–\$125 per mixed gal
- ☐ Finish Primer \$100–\$125 per mixed gal
- ☐ Thinners for the above \$40–\$70 per gal
- ☐ 1-Part Primers \$30/qt–\$90/gal
- ☐ Thinners for the above \$12/qt–\$42/gal

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- ☐ Tyvek Suits \$6–\$12
- ☐ Gloves \$12/box
- ☐ Respirators \$14–\$400

**45ft sailboat waterline to gunwale
will approximately require:**

- ☐ 4 Gallons of Primer
- ☐ 5–6 Gallons of High Build Primer
- ☐ Fairing compound as needed

PAINTING SUPPLIES

- ☐ Sandpaper
- ☐ Masking tape (\$6–\$30 per roll)
- ☐ Mixing pails
- ☐ Stirring sticks
- ☐ Wipe down rags
- ☐ Tack cloths
- ☐ Paint strainers

*Note: Prices are approximate and may
vary depending on location and vendor*



Sanding and cleaning the hull is the first step for any paint job



Prepping your topsides is key for a quality finish

As gelcoats age they lose their luster and become chalky and porous. They also become brittle, and crazing will begin to appear in areas where the boat flexes. At first the crazing will appear like it does on old china, where you can see the crack but cannot feel it when you run your finger over it. As the cracking progresses, however, you will begin to feel it, and the crack will keep expanding. This crazing and cracking is different from the stress cracks that occur around stanchions, cleats and other deck hardware.

If the gelcoat is in good condition with no major cracking or crazing, the job is relatively straightforward—clean and prepare the surface, apply an epoxy primer, sand the primer, remove the sand-

ing residue and then apply the topcoat. Gelcoats that are more heavily cracked or crazed will require additional preparation and labor. Areas that have been damaged will require still more labor to repair the surface.

At this point you will want to determine whether you want to do the work yourself or have a professional do it for you. If you want to do it yourself and have applied paint to smaller boats in the past, either with a single part enamel or a two-part polyurethane, then you will already be familiar with the techniques necessary to provide a good finish. One part-finishes are particularly easy to use, being less sensitive to temperature and humidity, and will provide a good finish. On the other hand two-part finishes—while more difficult to apply—have a higher gloss level and keep their color and glossy finish longer. They are also more resistant to abrasion.

If you decide to do the job yourself, there are some other things to consider. How much time will the project take? Do you have that much time? Do you have a good work place, the proper equipment, and the materials that are needed? And finally, and perhaps most importantly, do you have the skill required to do the job properly?

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A few questions to ask yourself before repairing your gelcoat

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The estimate for the labor on a 45ft boat for the hullsides alone will be between 60 and 80 hours from sanding and prepping through the final coat of primer. Eighty percent of the job is preparing the boat, 20 percent is applying the finish coat. The time it will take a dedicated do-it-yourselfer to apply the finish coat will be at least double that amount. In general, most repair yards estimate the job by the foot, so the estimate for painting the hullsides from the waterline to the gunwale with the gelcoat in good shape and maybe some minor crazing might be around \$300 to \$500 per foot from start to finish. Decks and anything from the gunwale to the coach roof may be quoted at two to three times the amount of the hullsides, because of the extra labor involved and to cover any surprises they may find. As a rule of thumb, yards generally figure one-third of the cost will be materials and two-thirds will be the cost of the labor.

DO YOU HAVE THE PLACE?

The best place to work on a boat is inside, where you can control the environment and work in clean conditions. Unfortunately, the best time for painting your boat is also the best time for using it. Much of the prep work is not temperature dependent, so you can clean, sand and maybe even apply primer in less than ideal conditions. Working outside in summer in the south or in winter in the north may not be as fun as it sounds. If you can do the work yourself in a boatyard be sure to follow the Green Marina practices.

DO YOU HAVE THE EQUIPMENT?

Sanders and safety equipment are just some of the things you will need. Many paint manufacturers have excellent product information that can be found on their websites, as well as customer service numbers you can call to speak with professionals and get expert advice. Both are great assets, as is going to boat shows and talking with the company representatives that cover your area. The more information you have, the better.

DO YOU HAVE THE SKILL?

Primers and fairing compounds will need to be sanded after application, so fear not first-timer: it will be difficult to make a mistake that cannot be corrected



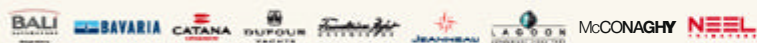
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BOAT WORKS PROJECT—PART I



A good Tyvek suit and respirator go a long way when working with coatings

If you do decide to repair the gelcoat yourself, this is what you'll need to do. The first step is to clean the surface. Anything that can cause a problem with the finish, such as oil, wax, grease, silicone, dirt, mold or mildew, must be removed prior to sanding. Why? Because not only does sanding not remove surface contamination, it may, in fact, spread the contamination from one area to another. And because of the heat developed when sanding, any wax, oil or grease on the surface may melt into it, making it extremely difficult to get it clean.

Start off by scrubbing the surface with soap and water using a Scotch-Brite pad, and make sure to rinse the soap residue off. If the water sheets off and does not bead up or separate, the surface is clean and ready to be sanded.

Next, inspect the surface and mark any nicks, dings or small scratches with a pencil. Go back and fill these areas with epoxy putty. Many people use a polyester putty for filling, because it dries quickly and is easier to sand. But in my experience it is best to only use polyester putty for small pinholes and use epoxy putty for anything larger—it is more stable and will not shrink or distort the way polyester putty will.

Once the imperfections have been filled, apply one to two coats of a high-build primer and then one to two coats of a finish primer. Final sanding of the finish primer should be done with 320- to 400-grit sandpaper. After sanding, wipe off the residue. Once the surface has been sanded and cleaned, apply two to three coats of finish.

For areas with deep cracking or crazing, start with 36- to 60-grit sandpaper and apply a high-solids epoxy, such as Awlgrip Hullgard. Fill and fair between each coat of primer. If the gelcoat has been damaged to the point where you can see the cloth pattern underneath or it has become delaminated, it will need to be repaired prior to application of primer. If this is the

PHOTO BY BILLY BLACK

REPAIRING DECKS

How to handle the topsides

Refurbishing a deck is very different from the hullsides. First, there is the labor required to get all the deck hardware removed or taped off. Even more taping is involved around the non-skid areas. Cracking around cleats, stanchions and chain plates will also need to be repaired, and if the bedding compound is old and cracked, there may be rot that will need to be repaired before refitting the hardware. You may be able to save some of the yard cost by removing the hardware yourself. My advice here is to not only to take a lot of pictures, but draw a map and label where everything goes. Check with whatever yard is doing the work to make sure this will, in fact, save you some money. Some yards use this procedure as part of the inspection process to ensure they discover any other problems that need to be corrected.

Preparing non-skid for painting is also a slower and more difficult process. If the deck is not cracked it may be a simple matter of cleaning, sanding and painting: sanding the molded in non-skid areas with coarse bronze wool and the smooth areas with 120-grit sandpaper. After that if the deck has minor cracking but does not seem to flex much you may be able to simply prime and paint. If, on the other hand, the deck has major cracking you will likely need to work from the interior of the boat to reinforce the deck. You may want to get the opinion of a professional applicator or surveyor before doing so to get an idea of what is going to be required and to make sure you are capable of completing the job.

case, in these areas start with a 100 percent solids epoxy such as WEST System Epoxy. After filling and fairing, apply a high build primer.

The point of all this filling, fairing, priming and sanding is to get the surface as smooth and even as possible to provide a blank canvas for the finish—the high gloss of the finish will

magnify every imperfection in the hull, and once the finish goes on it will not be possible to go back and repair the surface without removing the finish. **S**

Editor's Note: Stay tuned for part 2 in April, a guide to the best techniques for giving your boat a high-quality finish.



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Chain Guide

A simple anchor roller workaround

By Peter Nielsen

European builders caught on early to the anchoring needs of cruisers, but one issue with older U.S.-built sailboats is the lack of dedicated anchoring systems. Right up until the 1980s, and in some cases later, many otherwise functional and well-thought-out boats appeared with either no bow rollers or ones that were so undersized as to be useless.

This leads to problems for many sailors who snap up such older boats, often at bargain-basement prices, and are then faced with upgrading the anchoring setup or settling for a second-best solution, i.e. leaving it as is.

An elegant solution to the problem of an inadequate anchoring system

Often, the best solution is to have a stainless steel extension fabricated to hold one or two anchors and perhaps a tack point for an A-sail. Even then, because of the pulpit and its mounting points, it can be difficult to ensure a fair lead for the rode between the anchor roller and the deck pipe or windlass.

The owner of this veteran C&C came up with a simple but effective solution: a second roller clamped to the pushpit upright that keeps the anchor rode from contacting the upright and eases its passage to the windlass. The simple chain guide pictured here looks to be a homemade affair, and should not be difficult to replicate. **S**

Got your own tips? Send them to us at sailmail@sailmagazine.com

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do this? Let's
hope not!



PHOTO BY MARK CORKE

Electrical Alert

A potentially shocking installation

By Mark Corke

I often see poor electrical installations on boats, but here is a real classic. The owner of this boat wanted to install a switch for the air conditioning water pump, but there was no room for it on the shore power breaker panel. So, he simply attached it to the waste pipe under the galley sink. When I questioned him about this, um, unusual installation, he replied that it had been working fine for years!

What's worse, this is a 120V breaker and all it would take is an accidental contact with its live connections to bring your boating days to a premature end. Clearly, water and electricity do not mix,

and all breakers should be correctly mounted in a suitable panel. The ABYC rules on shielding are very clear: "Energized parts of electrical equipment shall be guarded against accidental contact by the use of enclosures or other protective means." Plastic electrical tape is not one of these! If you do not have room on your breaker panel for another switch, mount it somewhere away from moisture and make sure hands cannot come into accidental contact with the terminals. **S**

Lifelong boat addict and marine surveyor **Mark Corke** can be reached at surveymyboat.com



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Bad Plugs and a Fuel Tank Mystery



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DON CASEY HAS WRITTEN MANY BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON MARINE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

BAD PLUG?

Q: Do marine electronic plugs just go bad on their own? I have a GPS chartplotter that sometimes go off intermittently until I reach back and wiggle a certain multi-pin plug connection. Is this common?

Gene Ballard, Chicago, IL



GORDON WEST REPLIES

This is common if you leave your electronics on board during the winter. The tiny pins in the plugs may develop

residue if not exercised at least once a year. How do you exercise them? With your equipment turned off and no DC voltage passing through them, plug and unplug each connection 10 times. This will help clean the connections, and you should be good to go for another year. Each manufacturer has its own favorite type of contact pin spray cleaner, so before you spray the works, check with a local dealer for their recommendation. Only do this with your gear totally turned off. Connections with gold-plated pins are usually good for many years.

A DIESEL CONUNDRUM

Q: I'm trying to determine why the diesel fuel for my 4.108 low-line Perkins is getting black. I use the word "black" instead of dirty, because the fuel looks as if it is getting crankcase oil (or soot) mixed in it. I've taken a sample of the fuel and let it sit for several months, but whatever is suspended in it doesn't settle to the bottom. This is not the typical algae sludge that grows in fuel when water gets in the tank, and it gradually occurs even after I drain all the fuel out and refill the tank. The engine runs great. The fuel color doesn't seem to have any negative impact, other than bugging me. Here is what I've done:

- Replaced the aluminum fuel tank—despite being refilled with brand-new fuel, it started getting dirty right away, I believe from running the engine
- Replaced the fuel lines (when the tank was replaced)
- Bypassed the mechanical fuel pump and installed a marine grade electric pump. The fuel lines no longer run through the mechanical pump, hence there is no opening there to the crankcase
- The engine has a primary Racor fuel/water separator and a secondary filter. I replace filters yearly and they are always clean
- Replaced all injectors and the high-pressure pump

Is it possible for crankcase oil (or blow-by soot) to get into the fuel and be returned to the fuel tank? I've traced the lines and do not see where or how this could occur. If what I'm seeing isn't oil, do you have any ideas what it might be?

Jim Brady, via sailmail@sailmagazine.com



NIGEL CALDER REPLIES

I confess this not only is a new one on me, but I'm at a bit of a loss. The only place I can see any possible interaction between the fuel and the engine oil or carbon in the engine is at the injectors, where excess

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diesel is recycled back to the fuel tank (through the injector bleed-off lines). Even so, I can't think of an explanation for this. Perhaps one of our readers has a better idea?

Ed note: If anyone has the answer to this mystery, please let us know by e-mailing it to acort@sailmagazine.com

CABIN INSULATION

Q: I am restoring a 1963 Bermuda 40. The interior has all been removed and refinished. Before I reinstall it, I would like to add some insulation to the cabin sidewalls, because we sail in Maine, where it often gets chilly. Is there a way to do this without developing a future mold problem? This boat had a severe mold problem, which I have cleaned up, and I do not want to have to repeat the job in the future.

George Clark, Raymond, ME



DON CASEY REPLIES

In theory, all you have to do to prevent condensation from forming on the interior surfaces of the hull and deck in cold weather is to keep your cabin heat away from those surfaces. You can do this by lining

the hull and deck with an adequate thickness of fiber, foam or bubble insulation so as to isolate them from the interior space. Unfortunately, it is not easy to perfect this separation. Anywhere warmth finds its way behind the insulation, condensation will form, particularly on a solid fiberglass boat like the Bermuda 40. Over time, mold is likely to follow.

A more reliable solution, particularly as you now have the interior surfaces exposed, is to use spray-on urethane foam, like they do on steel boats, where condensation can lead to disaster, not just discomfort. This type of insulation bonds to the hull and deck surfaces, perfecting the separation required to prevent condensation. Spray foam is messy and toxic, so it is best applied by a professional. If you elect to do it yourself, be sure you have the proper safety equipment.

Another relatively easy and reliable option is to use a self-adhering closed-cell elastomeric



A gutted saloon ripe for insulating

foam, such as Armaflex. This type of product comes in sheets and rolls, and goes on like thick tape, making complete coverage mostly a matter of determination. Note that even if you do a perfect job insulating the interior fiberglass surfaces, condensation will still form inside portlights and on metal fittings. Here you need to catch the drips or improvise some temporary insulation. **S**

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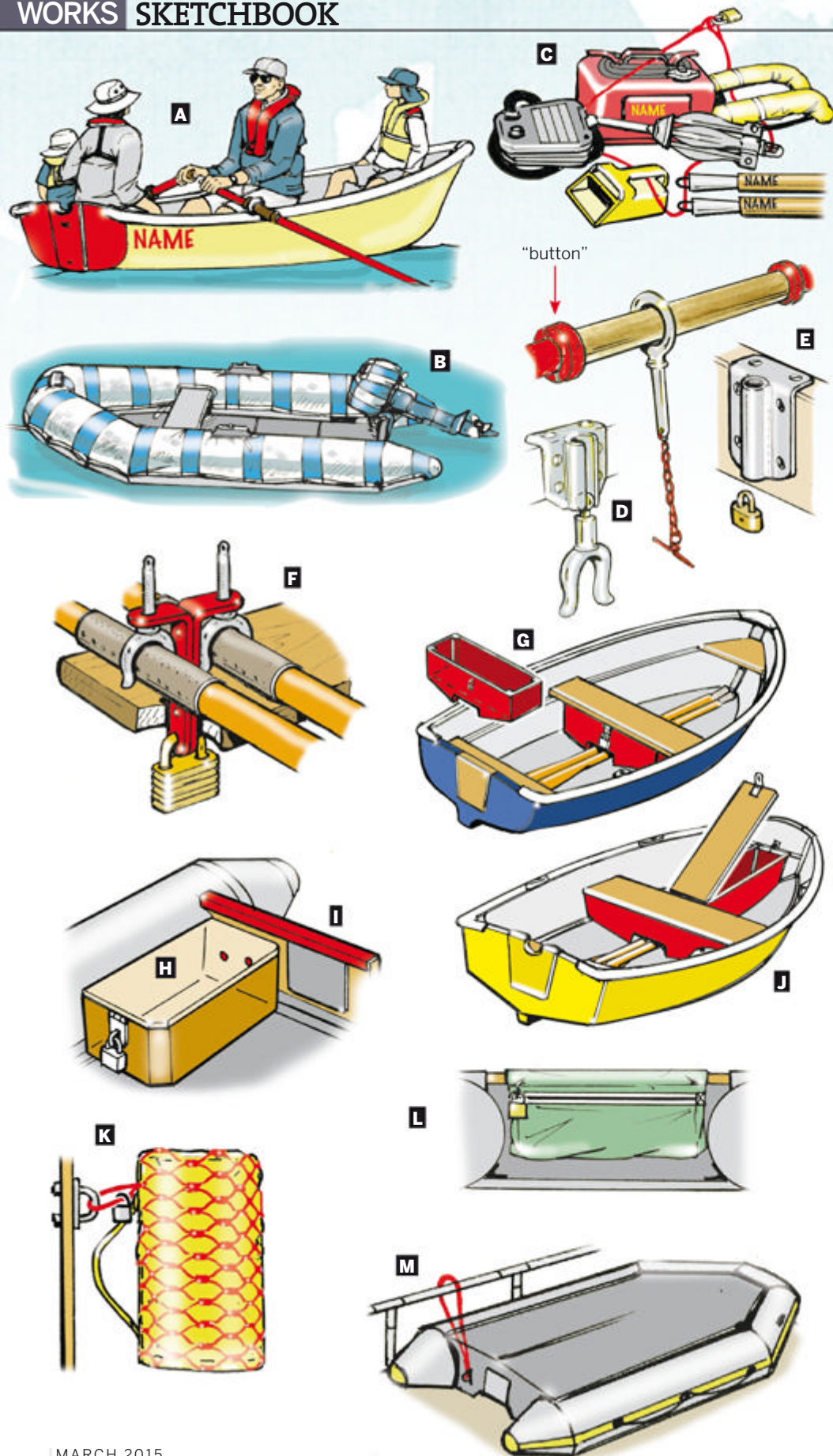


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Securing the Tender *By Dick Everitt*

A

Rowing a hard tender rather than motoring an inflatable means we don't need to carry stealable items like a pump, repair kit, tools, motor and fuel tank. A name in large letters and an odd color scheme helps to deter thieves, but avoid T/T (tender to) in the name, as it shows the mother ship is unoccupied.

B

An inflatable with an ugly cover over the tubes and the outboard keeps the tropical sun off and makes it look less desirable.

C

Gear can be locked together with a thin wire strop.

D

Unsecured rowlocks get "borrowed"—captive ones don't!

E

Closed oarlocks with "buttons" can be locked to the boat.

F

You can also make a bracket to fix them to the thwart.

G

A slide-in lockable box will trap the oars and protect all the items it contains.

H

An inflatable is very vulnerable, so this locked box is bolted to the transom.

I

Outboard locks help, and a metal-topped transom is harder to saw through, deterring outboard thieves.

J

This secure long box lets the oars slide in and creates a forward rowing position.

K

A bag conceals gear and equipment from prying eyes. This one is encased in a steel mesh wire cage that backpackers use.

L

A simple fabric seat holdall will at least keep bits and pieces out of sight.

M

If nothing else, hide some of your gear under the dinghy and make a show of strength by securing it. Or, in the Caribbean, pay a small fee to the local boat boys to keep an eye on her.

Dick Everitt has sailed thousands of miles in various parts of the world. He has been an illustrator, journalist and engineer for more than 40 years



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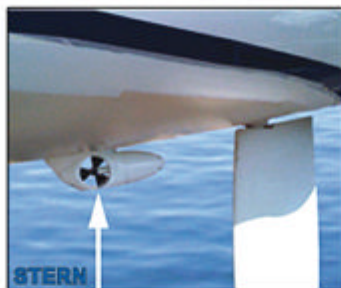
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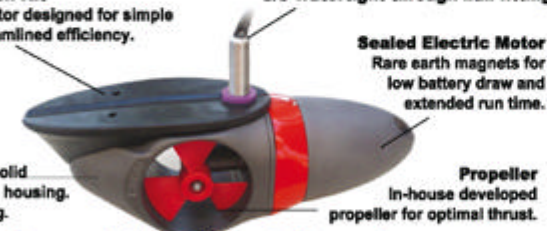
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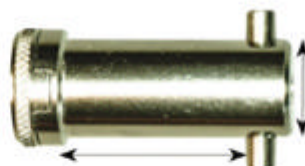
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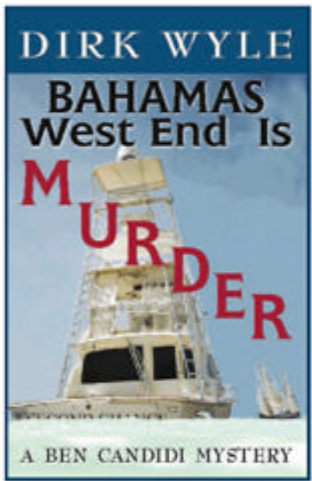
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Windshifts

By Capt. Robert Beringer

The Many Fs of Little Farmers Cay

I'm racing over the impossibly blue waters of a very feisty Exuma Sound and to port there's nothing but fiberglass-hungry rocks as far as I can see. The forecast warned of 25-knot winds, which seems about right, but the waves are sure a lot bigger than the three feet they had forecast. (Later that night I would look closer at the Passageweather website and see that there is an "m" indicating meters, not an "f" indicating feet, next to the wave height number.)

I am heeled over and hopeful that the waypoint on the Explorer Chart will lead me to a narrow inlet at Farmers Cut where I can shelter my Catalina 34, *Ukiyo*, from the growing tumult. The temperamental autohelm is having a bad day, so it's been the wheel and me for most of the time.

Depending on the tide stage and wind, Bahamian inlets are subject to severe rips, or "rages," that are capable of turning boats in circles and causing chaos onboard. So it is with a growing sense of dread (and blood pressure) that I approach the inlet. Fortunately, someone up there really does watch out for fools, drunks and sailors, and after starting the diesel I aim between the two big rocks and shoot through like a kayak on a stretch of Colorado River rapids. Inside, the tranquil turquoise water beckons us to drop an anchor and enjoy the favors of the smallest settlement in the Bahamas: Little Farmers Cay.

Back in 1842 a group of newly liberated slaves paid the British Crown £30 for the small craggy island, where they subsisted on crops and fishing. Years later they willed the land to their descendants with the proviso that it not be sold to off-islanders. Today about 55 people call this place home, and every year they welcome visiting boaters for the Farmer's Cay First Friday in February Festival—now that's some serious alliteration.

I arrive in time to grab a prime spot in front of Ty's Sunset Bar & Grill, which doubles as the airport lounge for the simple reason that the runway is just outside its front door. Incoming mariners briskly fill the empty harbor and come ashore to add more "F's" to the festival with food, fun and frolic. From the deck at Ty's we realize, too late, that we have anchored near the noisy flight path of the many private planes flying in for the weekend.

In the village I scout around for fresh vegetables, cheese or eggs, but as in many of the out islands, the pickings are slim. I meet the creators of the festival, Terry and Ernestine Bain, who run the Ocean Cabin Restaurant and conduct many of the festival's goofy games on their lawn. Ernestine's famous "guava duff" dessert alone is worth the trip here. Terry proudly tells me all about the island's history and the story of Little Farmers's own flag.



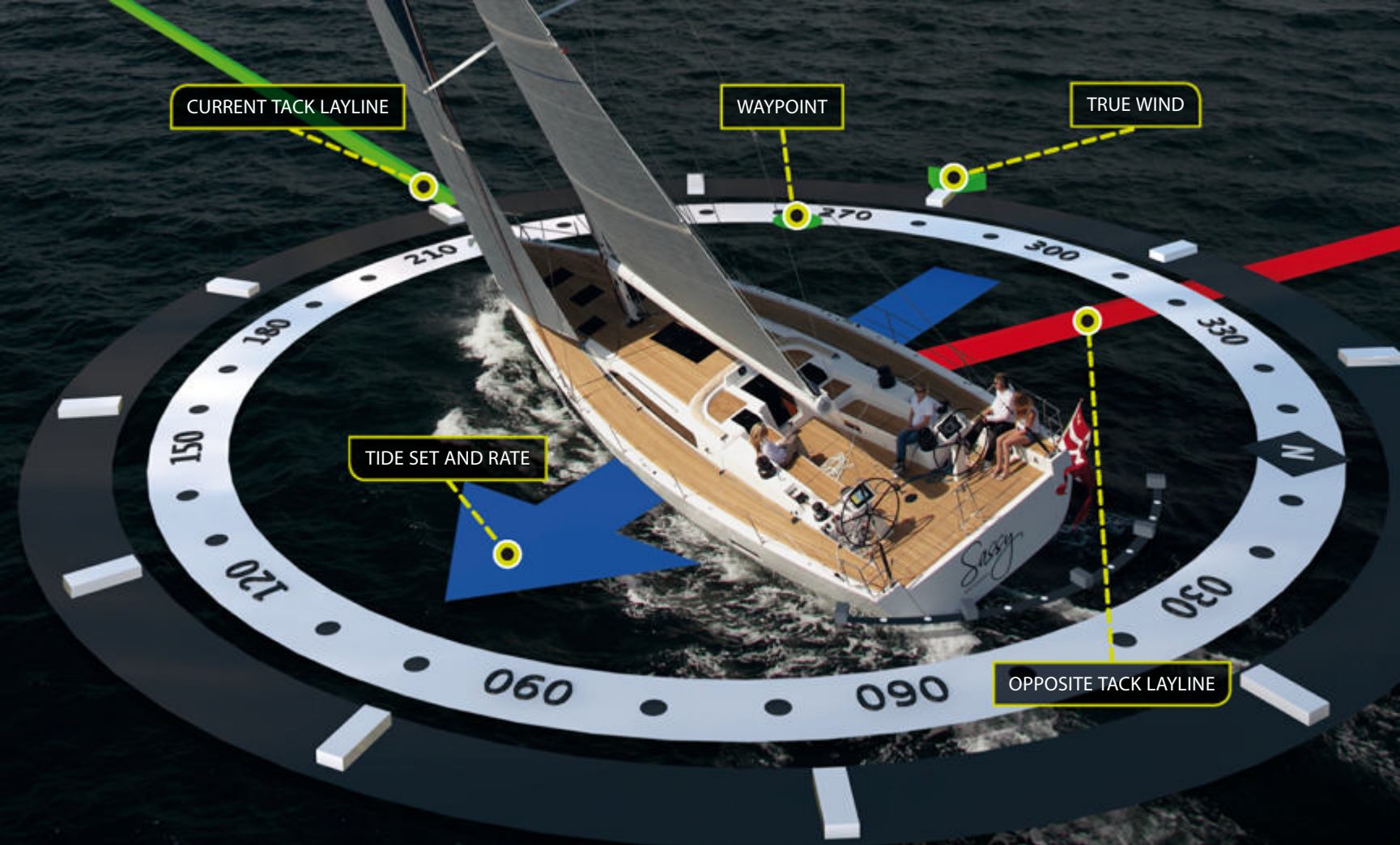
The mail boat arrives at the nearby yacht club with a special delivery on its deck that I've never seen before: the Class-C sailboats that will race in the festival regatta. As the boats are gently offloaded and the crews begin stepping masts and hanging rudders I wonder aloud: "The anchorage is stuffed with boats, where will the racecourse be?" What a foolish question. This is the Bahamas—as I soon learn, the anchorage is the racecourse!

Much like Formula One racing cars that weave through the streets of Monaco, the Class-C boats begin with a Le Mans-style start and then tear through the anchorage, at times passing perilously closely to the transoms and rudders of the visiting boats, prosecuting the triangular course through the final marker near Ty's.

Later, as the sun gently dissolves into the pink satin skies of the Exuma Bank, the race revelry carries on, thanks to an abundance of Kalik beer iced down by a nearby generator. I plunge over the side for an evening snorkel and see that the reef near me is actually the landing gear of a plane that didn't quite make the airstrip; a pair of large triggerfish stare defiantly out from the fuselage. Soon the power boats roar off into the night sans running lights, ferrying the inter-islanders back home. After that Ty kills the lights, and Little Farmers is once again dark and silent.

At dawn, with the ebb tide, we'll exit this peaceful place and move on to George Town. But tonight I relax on the foredeck with a warm beer and a Tristan Jones book, happy that I've stumbled across a place as wonderful as Little Farmers Cay and naively hopeful that it will not change. **S**

Robert Beringer is a marine writer living in Jacksonville, Florida. His first book, *Water Power!*, a collection of short stories, will be published this year.



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